

LOUDNESS AND PIZZAZZ: ETHICS AND THE PERFORMATIVE ETHOS IN A  
RESEARCH-INTENSIVE UNIVERSITY

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By

TRINA YVONNE RICHMAN-MONAR

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Dean, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
107 Administration Place  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5A2 Canada

## Abstract

This thesis reports on a case study of faculty members from three colleges at a Canadian university. The specific objectives of the case study are threefold: 1) to paint a picture of the current “face” of scholarship at a research intensive university; 2) to understand how faculty respond to tensions inherent in recent changes in higher education, and; 3) to explore what the findings mean for the ability of the University to fulfill its scholarly mandate. Findings are shared from this mixed-methods case study, and interpreted using a Foucauldian theoretical perspective. Faculty feel their work is important to them and describe themselves as engaged, but the majority feel overwhelmed and do not have time to do everything that is expected of them and to do it well. Faculty also struggle to reconcile what can be competing demands (e.g., to be a star researcher and a star teacher). I argue that a performative ethos has become embedded in everything from individual faculty renewal and promotion processes to institutional budgets and strategic planning processes. Although the performative ethos evolved amid efforts to improve accountability and promote scholarly excellence, I argue that it can actually encourage behaviors that diminish excellence in teaching and discovery, while also exposing faculty to ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas are more or less difficult to negotiate depending on how aligned one’s professional and personal values are with the performative ethos, and where one stands in the ranking system. How faculty respond to the performative ethos and these dilemmas has implications for whether or not the institution can achieve its mandate of excellence in teaching and discovery.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my girls, Nora and Heidi, who joined me in the world during the gestation of this degree and made me an infinitely better person. Thank you.

*“I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat”.* John Milton

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Research Problem

Education reform in Canada has undergone significant change in the last three decades, with policy and practice influenced by emerging orientations, most notably neoliberalism. Neoliberal changes are largely characterized by an increasing alignment with market imperatives, an emphasis on choice and productivity, and increasing accountability at the individual and institutional level (Sears 2003; Wotherspoon, 2009). Along with neoliberal policy changes in higher education, the ways in which knowledge is understood and valued have changed since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with applied knowledge and information exchange becoming increasingly prioritized by governments and industries over general knowledge as they seek to justify educational spending and stand out in a global market. Also, major developments in information and communication technologies have changed the ways in which information is gathered, stored, and shared, leading to the practice of ranking countries, institutions, and individuals on specified empirical criteria. This constellation of social, political, and technological developments works together to create a context for academic work that is vastly different than it was at the start of this period.

While academic work has never been without disciplinary or institutional constraints, new constraints have emerged related to the changes listed above that have altered the nature of how faculty do their work. In fact, Polster (2012) argues that changes in higher education are not just an “isolated development” but rather are “reorganizers of social relations that fundamentally transform what academics are and do” (p. 115). Neoliberal shifts in the academy have, in particular, been linked to major changes in academic work. These include the increased regulation of work as a means to ensure productivity and efficiency, the call to be more innovative and less incremental in research, the requirement for knowledge to be more “useful” to social, political or economic actors in the short and medium term, and the need to be increasingly flexible not only in how and when faculty do their work, but in their work itself – in how they conceptualize and tackle problems according to funding agencies’ predetermined criteria of importance and usefulness. Finally, there is an increasing emphasis on research productivity and quality teaching and learning.

That some of these changes can seem contradictory makes sense when examined through the lenses of the various logics that inform them. Using characteristics from Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury’s (2012, p. 56) inter-institutional system ideal types, a professional logic sees members of a profession deriving their legitimacy from their personal expertise, whereas a market logic would see them derive their legitimacy from “share price”, which in the university context could equate to the “value” they contribute to the institution. Within a professional logic, a member’s source of authority is their professional association, whilst a market logic holds shareholder activism (government, communities, parents, students, etc.) as its source of authority. Finally, a professional logic holds as the source of identity for its members one’s personal reputation, but a market logic holds the source of authority as “faceless” (p. 56). Faculty are called then to be experts in their field, upstanding members of their professional association(s), and to burnish their reputations, all the while diligently and often facelessly producing product(s) that are deemed valuable by university stakeholders. Academics exist in a constant state of flux as they negotiate these various logics, making universities both exciting

and frustrating places in which to work. Given this fraught context, this study focuses on faculty members' perceptions of their work and working environment, and their responses to these perceptions, highlighting the dynamics of power that accompany the "academic dance" (Polster, 2012) and the ways in which these dynamics both constrain and provide new avenues for activity.

This brings me to the objectives of this project, which are threefold: 1) to paint a picture of the current "face" of university scholarship, framed through a case study of the University of Saskatchewan (UofS), and looking specifically at faculty perceptions of their work and work environment; 2) to understand how faculty respond to challenges and tensions inherent in changes around accountability, including how they "do" their work, how they feel about their role and their work in terms of values, goals, motivations, and engagement, and; 3) to explore what the findings mean for the ability of the university to fulfill its scholarly mandate.

At first glance, my objectives might appear to be navel-gazing by a member of a privileged group. But the issues at hand - those of the changing nature of professional labour under the new regime of accountability - concern more than academics. These issues are prevalent in medicine, and any other profession where professional autonomy has heretofore been sacrosanct. When requirements for accountability for professional workers starts altering the nature of professional work itself, and when the profession has the public good as a central mission, my questions can be seen as more widely relevant. The focus turns away from quality of work-life (not to diminish the importance of this line of inquiry) and turns into one about the values and mission of entire institutions.

The University of Saskatchewan (UofS) is an excellent location for a case study to examine the impact of accountability on faculty and their work via rational planning. The UofS has been impacted by neoliberal trends in higher education, and, like other research-intensive universities in Canada, has struggled to keep up with the new demands that these trends engender, including national and global competition, the prevalence and importance of rankings, a growing need for revenue sources other than government, and an increase in the volume and ways in which universities, sub-units, and individuals are to be accountable. But it has also undergone significant and contentious changes in the last few years, resulting in intense attention on, and discussion of, university values and policies.

The contentious changes I refer to took shape at the UofS in a process called TransformUS, which is based on a model proposed by Dickeson (2010) to prioritize programs and services at academic institutions seeking to tighten their fiscal belts. As Dickeson (2010, p. 23) describes it:

The imperative for American higher education is to undertake a program-by-program review of all academic offerings...since all such offerings feed at the resources trough simultaneously. Programs should be measured with an eye to their relative value, so that reallocation can be facilitated.

I describe the TransformUS process in greater detail later in this dissertation, but I will say here that the process was a natural outgrowth of former decisions and policies at the UofS. Although the UofS is used here as a specific case, the prioritization process is present in other universities in Canada and the United States whose policies reflect rationality and accountability in planning. This includes the University of Guelph and Wilfred Laurier University in Canada, and Western

Carolina University, and the University of Alaska Anchorage in the United States, just to name a few.

I do not, for the record, think that the values that inform TransformUS - accountability, transparency, sustainability - are bad. Rather the opposite. My focus here is rather on how efforts to ensure these goals are met take on certain forms that shape, often in prescriptive ways, the ways faculty do their work. The fall-out for faculty in terms of managing these expectations, the challenges and tensions that result, and how faculty respond to them, is what is of interest in this study.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This study explores some of the indirect consequences of recent shifts in education reform by focusing on the nature of academic work. In exploring the relationship between increased accountability measures at a research-intensive university and faculty's perceptions of and responses to their work and working environment, my research seeks to answer three questions: 1) What is the current "face" of scholarship at the University of Saskatchewan?; 2) How do faculty perceive and respond to challenges and tensions inherent in changes in higher education?, and; 3) What do the findings mean for the ability of the University to fulfill its scholarly mandate?

## 1.3 Theoretical Framework

I have chosen to use the work of theorists Michel Foucault and Jean-Francois Lyotard to frame and inform this research because they allow me to describe the subtle power and ubiquitous nature of the changes to faculty work. They also provide a lens with which to view the complexity and inherent contradictions within academic work and faculty responses. As Ball (2004, p. 146-147) describes it, faculty experience tensions because of the need to spend time and energy on teaching, research and scholarly work, and service, while simultaneously monitoring and managing their own performance. Faculty also experience tensions between "commitment, judgment and authenticity within practice...[and]impression and performance" (p. 146). These tensions lead to a "schizophrenic" experience for faculty as they negotiate their personal and professional values and the demands placed on them to perform. How can faculty be so aggrieved about the current state of the academy, yet so dedicated to it at the same time? Why this deep malaise, and so little concerted action to counter it? It is Foucault's understanding of the insidious nature of knowledge/power and how they work to govern individual behavior through the internalization of hegemonic discourses (i.e., governmentality) that is most helpful to me in answering these questions and examining the current state of faculty and their work at the University of Saskatchewan. It is important to point out here the difference between "discourse" as it is used in everyday parlance, and discourse and the role it plays in Foucault's presentation of modern day forms of power. For Foucault, discourse is far more than a conversation or discussion. Discourse is the embodiment of ways of viewing and thinking about the social world that are embedded in our language and represents hegemonic ideas and values about the topic at hand - in this case, accountability. Foucault's conception of discourse moves the discussion from one about personal points-of-view and judgment to one about how power works in the social sphere and how it shapes every aspect of our lives.

Foucault (2007) argued that knowledge and power act together to create new discourses and “technologies of control that inculcate new norms and values” (Dehli and Taylor, 2006, p. 108). These discourses (e.g. discourse of accountability) and technologies (e.g., annual review) serve, through external coercion and/or unconscious internalization, to constrain the beliefs and behaviors of individuals and populations. To quote Gordon, describing Foucault’s notion of government: “[Foucault] addresses *government* itself as a practice – or a succession of practices – animated, justified, and enabled by a specific rationality (or, rather, by a succession of different rationalities) (2000, p. xxiii, original emphasis).

The process by which individuals internalize a generalized constraint is what Foucault calls governmentality. According to Brockling and Krasmann (2011, p. 13) understanding governmentality involves analytics of the political, or rather, “how the realm of the political is produced in the first place”. It involves understanding four key political dimensions: how divisions or distinctions are established; how problems are defined; how possible solutions are conceptualized, and; “how subjects are invoked [through] technologies of government”. The process of governmentality ensures that problems and solutions are understood in the “right” way; to conceive of them otherwise means questioning one’s current values, goals, and purpose, whether at a personal or institutional level.

In the case of reforms in higher education, and more specifically, of reforms at the University of Saskatchewan, political dimensions of governmentality can be seen in, respectively:

1. Distinctions between what kinds of knowledge and evidence of knowledge are valued, what are not, and how these forms of knowledge and knowledge production are related to criteria for program transformation.
2. Key challenges being identified as those of revenue generation, sustainability, transparency, competition, and relevance.
3. Key solutions being pursued of corporatization, investing in a knowledge economy, focusing on applied knowledge, and globalization/internationalization.
4. New programs of accountability being employed as governmental technologies.

This study takes for granted the existence of these different dimensions of governmentality. My focus for this study is on examining the impact of these distinctions, challenges and solutions, and governmental technologies on faculty and their work at the individual level. In this vein, I am working in the style of Polster (2012) who described how “I did not approach either policy in general or particular policies...by asking why they exist, how they might be reformed, and so on. Instead, I focused on what the policies do or accomplish institutionally...and then explored what further changes in people’s patterns of activity follow from this” (p. 117).

How does knowledge/power (i.e., governmentality) act to create technologies of control, especially at the individual level? According to Lyotard (1984), knowledge is no longer valuable in and of itself in a postmodern society. Rather, performativity or the “technological criterion” is what now legitimates science and knowledge – that is, knowledge/science with the most efficient inputs/outputs ratio is preferred. If there is no recognized “output” for a particular researcher or area of scholarship, the ends of that knowledge/science are not valued. Ball (2004) further develops the idea of performativity as:

a technology, a culture, and a mode of regulation...that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as a means of control, attrition, and change. The performances of individual subjects or organisations serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. They stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or values of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement...The issues of who controls the field of judgement is crucial. (p. 144)

This defines performativity. Lyotard (1984, p. 46) describes what performativity does:

"The production of proof, which is in principle only part of an argumentation process designed to win agreement from the addressees of scientific messages, thus falls under the control of another language game, in which the goal is no longer truth, but performativity – that is, the best possible input/output equation. The State and/or company must abandon the idealist and humanist narratives of legitimation in order to justify the new goal: in the discourse of today's financial backers of research, the only credible goal is power. Scientists, technicians, and instruments are purchased not to find truth, but to augment power".

For Foucault and Lyotard, knowledge in a postmodern society is therefore legitimated by the effect that it has - by what it produces. For instance, in a research university the value of knowledge production by faculty via scholarship is tied directly to the type and size of effect it has on intended audiences such as policy makers, private industry, or providers of public services (e.g., health services). In this way, knowledge produced by means of scholarship needs to "perform", and faculty are obligated to demonstrate the effect of the performance via curriculum vitae, portfolios, annual reporting to funders, and other accountability mechanisms. The creation and documentation of a performance by faculty - something which, to varying extents, all employees do regardless of industry - has been particularly fraught in recent years following a stream of reforms in the higher education sector. These reforms, faculty's experiences of them, and their responses to them, are the subject of this study.

To complement my use of Foucault and Lyotard, I am also using Deci and Ryan's psychological research findings on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to highlight the many ways that individual faculty can respond to these pressures to perform. Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 60) discuss how extrinsic motivation - "a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome"- can vary depending on the extent to which individuals internalize and integrate external goals or values. The more external values are internalized and integrated with their own values, the more they "emanate from a sense of self". Extrinsic motivation is therefore a continuum between complete external regulation and what Deci and Ryan call "integration". Integration is a complete acceptance of external values and norms to the point where they feel like they are internally sourced. This differs from intrinsic motivation in that the values originally source from the individual.

Deci and Ryan's work highlights the diversity of experiences of governmentality that are possible and the range of potential experiences balancing structural and agentic demands. Their

theory also aligns nicely with Foucault's work on audit, highlighting the ways in which dominant discourses can become internalized and subsequently (and invisibly) inform individual behavior:

As Gordon so beautifully puts it in analyzing Foucault's work in *Discipline and Punish*:

'Progressive Western societies have ostensibly operated for two centuries on principles of liberty and the rule of law, while effectively operating on a basis of coercive dressage and disciplinary order' (Gordon, 2000, p. xxii). Like a well-trained pony, the free individual responds willingly to the smallest signs telling it where it should run and how it should leap. Compliance can be normalized and so taken for granted as the everyday practices of work as usual, that the dressage is barely visible... In being taken up as one's own ambitions, the ambitions of government become a technology of the self (Davies and Bansel, 2010, p. 9).

This study will pay particular attention to the ways in which faculty respond to the changes in higher education, how they feel about their role at the university, the extent to which they share the values and goals of the institution, and how, if at all, they make sense of their role in taking on (or not) institutional values, goals, and means.

To be clear, my goal for this study is not to determine causation, but to understand how structural changes in higher education at large, and subsequent organizational changes at the UofS, may have impacted faculty's work experiences and their perceptions of their working environment. Findings from all sources of data will be woven together in a reflection on the future of scholarship (given the wide-ranging debate about the faculty role in the new knowledge economy – discussed below) and the ability of the UofS to fulfill its scholarly mandate.

#### 1.4 Importance of this Research

This study is important because, while institutions across the globe are increasingly applying scientific systems to the management of work and budgeting in hopes that they will increase productivity, effectiveness, and transparency, there has been little empirical examination of the impact these changes may have on the ability of faculty and institutions to fulfill their scholarly mandate (as opposed to their fiscal one). And while some studies have taken place examining the impact of higher education policy changes on academics and scholarship (the general consensus of which I would describe as a malaise), the changes at the University of Saskatchewan have been particularly focused and acute. Indeed, the changes were intended to irrevocably change the institution, as evident in the name of the process "TransformUs". For this reason, the University of Saskatchewan is an appropriate place for a case study to examine the impact of these changes on faculty's perceptions of their work environment, their work itself, and the future of scholarship.

The significant contributions of this work are its:

- 1) Contributions to the debate around the "new" face of scholarship, and faculty members' identity and agency as neoliberal "subjects" (i.e., Can they "*do*" without "*being*"? (Archer, 2008b, p. 259), and;
- 2) Contributions to the literature on the impact of accountability measures on higher education institutions with a research and innovation mandate.



### 1.5 Overview of Thesis

In Chapter Two I provide a genealogy of the discourse of accountability and its impact on education reform, tracing the theoretical, political, economic, social, and technological changes that together created the conditions in which the recent reforms became intelligible and thus possible<sup>1</sup>, and which contributed to the intended and unintended consequences that I examine in this study. These changes include the corporatization of the university, the commercialization of knowledge, increasing emphasis on science and applied fields of study, developments in information- and communication-technologies, and globalization/internationalization. In Chapter Three I discuss how these reforms have impacted academics' work in terms of regulation and intensification, and how faculty are responding to these changes. In Chapter Four I review my methodology and methods, and provide a general overview of the characteristics of focus group and survey participants, as compared to the wider University of Saskatchewan faculty population as a whole.

In Chapter Five I present the findings related to faculty members' work and working environment, and their perceptions of engagement, and introduce the concept of a performative ethos. In Chapter Six I outline the challenges and tensions that faculty identify in their work, particularly as they are related to increasing calls for accountability and related technologies of governance (increased reporting, particular types of knowledge valued, particular sources of funding valued, increased management of time/work, etc.), before considering the ethical dimensions of these challenges. Chapter Seven examines the feelings and reactions faculty shared in response to the challenges and tensions they face in their work, before turning in Chapter Eight to a discussion of what the performative ethos, and faculty's responses to it might mean for the university's ability to achieve its mandate.

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of Foucault's use of genealogy and its subsequent move to archeology, see Foucault power/knowledge, compiled by Gordon (1980): 243.

## 2. The auditor's gaze: A genealogy of the discourse of accountability

*Society is not prepared to accept that higher education is self-justifying and wishes to expose the activities of the secret garden. With greater expectations being placed on it, higher education is being obliged to examine itself or be examined by others. (Barnett, 1992, p. 16)*

To understand faculty reactions to policies of accountability, one must first examine the context surrounding the emergence of the corporate university and the new regime of accountability. I do so via a genealogy of the discourse of accountability in academic institutions. That is, I examine the political landscape and the role knowledge plays within the new knowledge economy and then link these changes to developments in the theory of knowledge and advances in technology that alter how and what we know, and, subsequently, what can be accounted for within the academic realm. It is these specific contextual factors that allow a general discourse of accountability to emerge, to shape the academic working environment, and to legitimate (or not) responses to these changes. Strathern (2000, p. 2) describes this 'stepping back' from the specific in order to understand the general: "By themselves audit practices often seem mundane, inevitable parts of a bureaucratic process. It is when one starts putting together a larger picture that they take on the contours of a distinct cultural artefact".

For Foucault, a genealogy is "a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domain of objects, etc. without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history" (Foucault, 1977, p. 117). The current discourse of accountability can be said to have emerged around the 1960's. This transformative decade, and those that closely followed it, bred a host of theoretical, political, economic, social, and technological changes that led to our current ways of thinking about knowledge and the university's role in society; these ways of thinking and speaking about knowledge have become ubiquitous fixtures in policy and scholarship about the changing university, to such a point, according to Harvey (2004) that have become "hegemonic" (p. 3).

While many see the current regime of accountability as "sinister, Orwellian" (McWilliam, 2004, p. 156), its genesis is not the product of some evil mastermind. Paraphrasing Strathern (2000) in Tamboukou (2012) "audit cultures are not straightforward systems of domination, but rather matrices of complex practices, values, and discourses, at once obstructive and enabling" (p. 860). This chapter is devoted to outlining the rather more neutral conditions of possibility for what I will call *the auditor's gaze*, in the same way that Gordon (Foucault, 1977, p. 243) describes Foucault's work as outlining a "multiplicity of political, social, institutional, technical, and theoretical *conditions of possibility*, reconstructing a heterogeneous system of relations and effects whose contingent interlocking makes up what Foucault calls the *a priori* of the 'clinical gaze'" (original emphasis).

It is this "gaze", the auditor's gaze, that reflects a shift from what Blackmore *et al* (2010) describe as government to governance, "i.e., from authority that is exercised from locatable venues of official decision, to a diffusion of micro-managerial mechanisms that tacitly encode and instill norms of work performance, in the process constituting self-regulatory dispositions and identities among university actors" (p. 3). This is the shift that Foucault describes from biopolitics to governmentality - from the government of bodies through physical authority, to the

self-government of individuals via the diffusion of all-encompassing discourses. To be clear, this form of governance as governmentality, as power embedded in discourses and accompanying (dis)incentive systems that are internalized, is different from what Wright suggests is the “old” governance system, in which “an individual and organization [keep] themselves in good order through their own wise commend” (2014, p. 330). It is the effects of governance as governmentality that is being investigated in this thesis.

The conditions of possibility that enable a discourse of accountability and the auditor’s gaze in higher education include: a neoliberal political shift; the emergence of new ways of thinking about knowledge and its role in society and the economy; technological advancements; and global shifts in expectations around how universities are to engage with social institutions in a new “innovation culture”.

## 2.1 Neoliberalism and the knowledge economy

Harvey (2005) defines neoliberalism as a “theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (p. 2). According to Harvey, neoliberal thinkers are “liberal” because of their commitment to personal freedom, but are “neo” because of their commitment to free market principles (p. 20). Neoliberalism has been described as an ethic by Treanor (2015), where neoliberalism is “the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs”. For Sears (2003, p. 16-17), neoliberalism is an “ethos” that permeates a culture, embedding itself in the lives of individuals in ways that seem so permanent, so unavoidable, that they are seldom questioned. At all levels (economic, culture, individual), a “lean” ethos for Sears infers an affiliation with instrumental rationality that holds the market (work/labour, employers) as the ultimate reference points (p. 81). In a neoliberal context, accountability thus serves simultaneously as an ethical imperative and a key tool in the neoliberal toolbox to ensure a return on investment.

It is in the political context of neoliberalism that the “knowledge economy” as we know it bloomed. Bullen, Kenway, and Fahey (2010) argue that theories of the knowledge economy had their beginnings in the 1960’s, beginning with Peter Drucker’s 1959 writing on “knowledge work” and “knowledge industries”, based on his observations that white-collar workers now outnumbered blue-collar workers, and looked to do so for the foreseeable future. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines knowledge economies as “economies which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information” (1996, p. 7). Neoliberal theoretical and political principles, with their focus on putting knowledge to work, and taken up with abandon in the late 1970’s (see Harvey, 2005), provided the perfect growth medium for an emerging “knowledge economy” and subsequent governance of research that we now see in most scholarly institutions (Bullen *et al*, 2010).

Within the knowledge economy, funding of education is rather contradictory. Governments (and universities) stress education as an investment in the human and social capital of their citizens and communities, but at the same time, the emphasis on investment and growth is accompanied by significant restructuring in budgets with dollars being redirected to offset increasing costs of

health care, infrastructure, or other major priorities. The role of the university is also changing, as universities are pressed by governments to provide more access to more people. The process of “massification”, described in Alexander (2000) as the “rapid enrollment growth in higher education”, creates new types of jobs that involve technology, are knowledge based, and are intended to be the foundation of the new economy (p. 415). At a more theoretical level, massification, for Sears (2003, p. 31), has “been shaped around the project of making citizens”, or bringing citizens into the “embrace of the state”. Sears argues that, in a Foucauldian sense, citizenship is “a set of disciplines” that enable and proscribe certain behaviours by individuals (obeying laws, freedom to vote, being administered) that prepares them for “this particular combination of freedom and submission” (p. 33). And so, whereas universities used to focus largely on knowledge creation and community service, they are now heavily marketed as conduits for developing competent citizen-employees and knowledge products for the new knowledge economy (Cote & Allahar, 2007).

## 2.2 Theories of Knowledge and its Commodification

The term “knowledge economy” is part of everyday parlance, but it was not always this way. In fact, “knowledge” has come to mean very different things to different people over the last several decades. While knowledge has come to be seen as paramount to the success of a modern economy, knowledge began to be differentiated from, and in many instances subordinated to, information and *applied* knowledge in part because of a transformation of the way society thinks about knowledge.

Bullen *et al* describe a “significant development” in theories on knowledge related to “a distinction between tacit and codified knowledge [that] entrenched the importance of the latter in economic growth” (Bullen *et al*, p. 60). Tacit knowledge is fundamental, complex, and experiential, and is therefore not easily known. Polanyi (1966, p.4) describes it this way:

We know more than we can tell...we know a person's face, and can recognize it among a thousand, indeed a million. Yet we usually cannot tell how we recognize a face we know, so most of this cannot be put into words...When you see a face, you are not conscious about your knowledge of the individual features (eye, nose, mouth), but you see and recognize the face as a whole.

Tacit knowledge is difficult to transmit because it most often requires experience. On the other hand, Bullen *et al* describe codified knowledge as knowledge that can be “transferred, traded, standardised, and quantified” (p. 60). These qualities of codified knowledge allow a knowledge economy to function; codified knowledge becomes its primary currency.

Distinctions are not only being made between types of knowledge, but also between types of knowledge production. Mode 1 production is disciplinary, often remains in the academic realm, and requires a relatively homogeneous set of skills, whereas Mode 2 knowledge production is transdisciplinary, requires a heterogeneity of skills, and is produced in a context of application (Gibbons, 1998, p. 5). The Mode 1-Mode 2 model to describe knowledge production has given way, or evolved, to the Triple-Helix model proposed by Etzkowitz (1993) and subsequently by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000) to draw attention to how university-industry-government relations have come to be closely intertwined and take on characteristics from each other to

promote innovation. To ensure clarity for the reader, I should state that when I use the word “applied” in this paper to describe preferred forms of knowledge or knowledge production, I am generally referring to Mode 2 or triple-helix scenarios, where knowledge is produced or sponsored by a diverse group of constituents with an interest in putting the knowledge products to work whether in a for-profit (e.g., Cameco), or non-profit (e.g., Saskatchewan Ministry of Education) setting.

In a Foucauldian sense, the theorizing of difference between types of knowledge and knowledge production (tacit and codified; Mode 1 and Mode 2; triple-helix) made practical distinctions between them possible. Because some forms of knowledge and knowledge production are more easily “knowable”, more readily “put to work”, and more, well, “productive”, they became the focus of intense political and monetary investment by global bodies (e.g., OECD, WHO) nation states, governments, institutions, and individuals. It is in this context that the primacy of the auditor emerged, as the new economy became contingent on how successfully knowledge was distributed within the economy. In this sense, and borrowing from feminist-economist Marilyn Waring’s (1999) analysis of the world economy, unless knowledge circulates through the economy, whether through sales or job creation, intellectual property rights and related revenue, litigation, or public-private partnerships, it is not perceived to have value.

The development of theories around Codified knowledge and Mode 2 knowledge, and their subsequent adoption by policy makers globally, allowed for greater commodification of knowledge and the beginnings of a preference at policy levels for all things related to the applied sciences, which are represented in large part by the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics (otherwise known as STEM disciplines). For instance, as Bullen *et al* (2010, p. 60) state, because codified knowledge can be “transferred, traded, standardised, and quantified [it] favors the quantitative and technical orientation of the sciences...[and leads to] research and governance models [being] primarily geared to codified knowledge”. A recent and explicit example is from an article in the February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 edition of the *New York Times* in which Patricia Cohen outlines what she calls “a rising call to promote STEM education and cut liberal arts funding”. She provides examples of American states like Kentucky and North Carolina where incentives are offered to students in STEM disciplines over those in non-STEM disciplines, particularly the humanities. Wells Fargo, the “financial services giant” has recently had to recall advertisements after a furor erupted over a campaign directed at teenagers which inferred that arts-based careers are “yesterday” and STEM-based careers are “today” (Paulson, 2016).

A Canadian example of funding models oriented towards STEM disciplines is Canada’s federal Science and Technology (S&T) strategic document, entitled *Seizing Canada's Moment: Moving Forward in Science, Technology and Innovation 2014*, in which the federal government announces new funding to support S&T. The health sciences council CIHR receives \$15 million in new funding, the natural sciences and engineering council NSERC receives \$15 million, and the social sciences and humanities council SSHRC receives just over half of its counterparts’ allocations, at \$7 million.

Given the value placed on largely quantitative, technical, and applied forms of knowledge, it follows that information technologies to store and distribute knowledge products would become of paramount importance in a globalized world.

2.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Standardization, and Intensification  
Information and applied knowledge play primary roles in the functioning of a neoliberal economy in a globalized world. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) used to gather, store and share information to guide market decisions are therefore the backbone to the knowledge economy (Bullen, p. 57), and neoliberal activities. Brown, Lauder, and Ashton (2011) argue that these technologies, and the knowledge base of workers skilled in them, have permeated a globalized labour market. The entrance of China and India into a global labour market has, they argue, bred fierce competition for middle-class jobs in sectors where skills are portable between locations and transferable between types of jobs. Brown *et al* argue that this had led to what they call in their title a “global auction” for employees that has made the promise of a college degree as a guarantee of employment a chimera.

ICTs also allow accountability to exist, at least in the way that academics currently understand it, related to financial and progress reporting on research, teaching evaluation by means of student and peer evaluations, and program review in terms of revenue generation and cost reduction. ICTs allows comparisons to be made between institutions at a national and global level, leading to standardization in rating criteria followed closely by global ranking systems.

The advent of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1961 heralded a new era of comparative educational research involving data collection and comparison at the national and institutional levels. To facilitate international comparisons, and satisfy state and other external requirements for accountability, it became necessary to determine equivalencies and rank degrees and institutions. These examinations of quality and the subsequent ranking that occurs have facilitated the relatively efficient exchange of people and knowledge between educational institutions. As an example, if one has a degree from Harvard, employers around the world generally have an impression of what that person is capable of. As OECD members, nations and institutions must also subscribe to a data collection regime that measures comparable features of their educational systems; they must seek to represent themselves as best they can by influencing their internal organizations and units to excel at the narrowly defined and strictly controlled aspects of education systems being measured.

University rankings and their location in the new knowledge economy have a big impact on how universities are run and how political and university leaders strategize and alter their activities to influence those rankings (Marginson, 2010, p. 26). Marginson, Blackmore, Brennan, and Zipin (2010, p. 7) state that university rankings and indexes are proving increasingly influential at a global level - they are “signifiers of quality”, offering “transparency”, “accountability”, and comparability. In order to improve their position in rankings, universities use many governance strategies including recruiting and rewarding certain types of performers, benchmarking against similar institutions, setting targets, and using performance indicators (p. 8).

Ranking systems affect every level of the university. For Marginson, rankings are “a global technology” of governance that push all institutions towards English-speaking, “science-heavy” norms, to concentrate research in certain universities, and to prescribe what types of innovation

and knowledge are pursued (Blackmore *et al*, p. 8). Marginson (2010, p.19) has the following to say about standardization in the form of rankings:

On the face of it, rankings ought to be wildly unpopular. But the rankings juggernaut rolls on. For the foreseeable future it is unstoppable because it meets the political, economic, and cultural needs of the times. It provides substance for external pressures for accountability and performance and the rubrics of community and industry engagement. It feeds into the global student market, into the marketing pitch of institutions and the choice-making of prospective students.

Rankings may be tolerated as a necessary evil, but I would argue that there is a parallel intensification in faculty work that has accompanied the use of ICTs to undertake and document faculty work which could certainly be seen as wildly unpopular. The use of ICTs to undertake academic work is extensive. Special training is required for software programs to use, and report on the use of, research funds. Applying for research funding is an increasingly labyrinthine task, whether mastering online submission formats for different funding agencies (including proprietary formats for Curriculum Vitae or CVs), following signature protocols within one's institution, submitting forms for ethical approvals (and extensions and changes to protocol), and reporting on progress or study completion. Teaching is also subject to intense use of ICTs from preparation and sharing of class materials, to teaching evaluations by means of student and peer evaluations, and exam marking and submission. Not only do these tasks require an investment of time up-front to learn the particular process and software, but they require diligence as a faculty member moves through their daily activities, ordering supplies and billing the expense to a specific research account, uploading midterm marks, updating their online CV(s) with a publication, etc. ICTs have become an invigilator to faculty work, a constant and near presence, ensuring compliance.

## 2.4 Innovation Culture

According to Axelrod (2002), as governments began to see education in increasingly utilitarian ways, they began to insist on private sector involvement in university education. The 1990's saw an emerging focus on "national systems of innovation" (Bullen, 2010, p. 58), or "networks of institutions in the public and private sectors whose activities and interactions initiate, import, modify, and diffuse new technologies" (Freeman, 1987, p. 4). This focus came about as a result of newly emerging theories around the central role innovation plays in economic growth (Bullen, p. 58). This new focus heavily influenced the strategy development of the OECD and several influential countries, and trickled down to other organizations and countries from there, resulting in an "emphasis on business-university alliances, inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration, the development of research clusters and concentrations, and a focus on research in new technologies and commercialization" (p. 58). As an example, the OECD states in a 1996 document, *The Knowledge-Based Economy*:

In the knowledge-based economy, innovation is driven by the interaction of producers and users in the exchange of both codified and tacit knowledge.... The configuration of *national innovation systems*, which consists of the flows and relationships among industry, government and academia in the development of science and technology, is an important economic determinant (p. 7, original emphasis).

A critical perspective on the innovation culture is that it represents, in large part, an overall lean-ethos cultural shift (Sears, 2003, p. 115). In the context of education, an innovation culture

depends on emphasizing science and technology (as opposed to liberal or fine arts), and entrepreneurship at national, institutional and individual levels, as both a practical skill and a cultural value (p. 115-117). What Sears finds remarkable about the knowledge economy and the subsequent focus on innovation culture is the “aura of inevitability that the government has tried to reconstruct around its educational, economic and social policies”, referring to ‘lean’ policies that align all activities to the market (p. 234). This taken-for-grantedness extends to university management and governance, in which neo-liberal discourses have become normalized and naturalized (Davies & Petersen, 2005, p. 96).

## 2.5 Conclusion

I have outlined how new ways of theorizing about society, the economy, and knowledge made possible a shift towards the primacy of the market in everyday life and the subsequent importance that knowledge and information (and subsequently, universities) played in the new economy. A market-focus and reliance on information, along with a global perspective, have become standards of educational policy and made possible a discourse of accountability – that is, a discourse where knowledge is often only as important as it is measurably useful, and where usefulness is determined by parties who may or may not be involved in the knowledge production process. As McWilliam (2006, p. 161) states, “the logic here is that it is only possible to know that a university is performing its educative function properly if its workings are made visible on the brightly lit forensic table of audit”.

When Sears describes the innovation culture and its central role in the knowledge economy as having an aura of inevitability about it, he highlights the insidious way in which technologies of governance embed themselves in the fabric of institutions and the lives of individuals working within them. Forms of knowledge (Mode 2 and codified knowledge), the ethical and instrumental values attributed to them, the specific outputs (i.e., applied knowledge) that are deemed acceptable, and the means by which those outputs are measured (e.g., progress and financial reporting, program review and restructuring) seem, to a large extent, taken for granted in everyday interactions within modern universities.

The auditor’s gaze as the ultimate reference point for academic institutions is reflective of the governmental effect the accountability discourse is having in academic institutions. While university governance has always existed, the current incarnation reflects an outward gaze that constantly gauges how the university is perceived and adjusts its internal governance to maximize important outcomes. The discourse of accountability, via internal governance, takes form in specific practices within the corporate university.

The next chapter highlights some of the key changes occurring within universities, before outlining current research around how faculty work is being impacted as a result of these global and institutional changes. As particular modes of internal governance (i.e. manifestations of the accountability discourse) I focus on increased regulation and intensification of work. I then explore the impact these processes have on faculty work and their working environment, and the tensions these processes engender for faculty as professional knowledge workers. I conclude the chapter by reviewing recent research on faculty identity, agency, and their responses to these tensions.



### 3. Faculty Work in the Corporate University

Chapter Two reviewed the political, social, and technological changes that led to the ubiquitous discourse of accountability in today's universities. This chapter reviews the key changes to universities that have resulted in large part from a focus on being accountable (to whom, and in what ways will be discussed shortly) before moving on to a discussion of how these institutional changes impact faculty work.

As part of universities' work to align themselves with the new discourse of accountability, new forms of governance are taking shape at different levels (Blackmore, 2010, p. 7). At the macro level, there is increasing governance of universities by governments and the private sector. At the meso level there is increasing organizational governance through corporate-styled management and leadership and at the micro level a "host" of governmentalities have emerged related to university work practices, relationships, and identities (p. 7). These changes are led by what Blackmore *et al* call more "muscular" management and executives in response to external regulations (p. 6). In this chapter I will use Blackmore's macro/meso/micro framework as a heuristic device to highlight changes to the university in general and to faculty work, weaving in examples from the UofS to highlight the local context of this case study. I undertake a review of key policy and strategy documents from the University of Saskatchewan, pulling out important themes related to the challenges the university faces in the higher education context, how it frames the key challenges, conceives of solutions to those challenges, and implements processes to put those solutions in place. These themes will help inform my analysis of the survey and focus group data.

#### 3.1 The corporate university

At the macro level, the relationship between universities, governments, and private industry, dubbed the "triple-helix" (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000), resulted from political calls for an innovation culture that could anchor the new knowledge economy, as described in the previous chapter. The triple-helix is characterized by an "outward-looking corporate-style university" in terms of: the communities that it serves, where it seeks new revenue streams, its focus on new private sector values and principles (contracting out services, standardized performance measures), and adopting business governance models (Polster, 2009, p. 356).

The UofS, like most research-intensive post-secondary institutions, exhibits classic characteristics of a corporate university that is competing in a global market. This is most evident in the corporate language being used at the leadership level and in strategic documents. While the language has evolved in intensity, becoming more vigorous over time in recent years, the market-orientation has been in place for some time. For example, in 2002, the UofS's Strategic Directions document *Renewing the Dream*, identifies the key challenges facing the university as the need to be "flexible" and "responsive" to accommodate rapid changes in the university environment; the need for students and faculty who are "citizens of the world" (implying the need to compete in a global market); the commodification of knowledge produced at the University; competition for faculty; increasingly targeted government funding (thus, less general operating funding); and; increased differentiation and competition between Canadian universities.

The *President's 2010 Strategic Directions Update* continues the focus on competition as a key challenge, highlighting the “shake-up” in the Canadian university scene that is having “transformative” effects on the university world in general and the Canadian higher education sector in particular. While the push to recruit faculty is identified as having been successful, the University is falling short in terms of meeting its goals around revenue generation from the Tri-Council (the federal government's research funding bodies in the Natural Sciences, Health Sciences, and Social Science and Humanities). This was and is problematic for the UofS on two counts. Tri-Council funding is a widely accepted marker of quality, innovation, and competitiveness in research at the national and international level. Stagnant levels of funding from this source are believed to indicate a stagnant research enterprise at the institution. Secondly, Tri-Council research funding is accompanied by significant overhead funding (around 40-50%) in addition to the research grants themselves, and the funding is used to support research activities at the institution. A lack of Tri-Council research grants leads to a lack of overhead funding to support research infrastructure at the institution. The problem is therefore a circular one: poor performance at the TriCouncil leads to limited resources at the institutional level that could be used to improve research performance going forward.

In the University's *2012-2016 Integrated Plan* we see perhaps the most marked use of market language to date. The call to be globally competitive continues, but the language of return on investment (ROI) and accountability is beginning to emerge, as in the following excerpt:

In this era of increased competition for scarce resources with other sectors and increasing government expectations of universities, we will need to demonstrate good return on investment including our contributions to economic and social innovation, productivity enhancement, economic growth and job creation, as well as citizenship and policy-making. Concurrent with an environment of constrained resources, expectations for accountability and stewardship of the public's trust are increasing. We are called upon to provide unprecedented levels of accountability in the new “fishbowl” reality for higher education (p. 2).

In Chapter 2, I discussed how governmentality can be seen in higher education in terms of how divisions and distinctions are established between types of knowledge and subsequently in types of knowledge producers and products. Thus far in Chapter 3, I have tried to further explore the process of governmentality in higher education in terms of how problems are defined, based on these distinctions. One can clearly see, in the UofS's uptake of corporate practice and ethos, a particular valuing of knowledge that “works” and knowledge products (material or otherwise) that can be measured. We can see how key challenges are defined primarily in terms of competition, revenue generation, accountability, and relevance (particularly “return on investment”). The role of the all-seeing auditor(s) is a powerful and prescriptive one, generating a suite of organizational, fiscal, and programmatic solutions in response to the new “fishbowl reality”. The solutions that research-intensive universities, including the UofS, have devised to meet these challenges are discussed next.

### 3.2 Academic capitalism: What do corporate universities do?

The orientation of knowledge creation activities to the market leads to the development of organisational strategies to fulfill this new mandate, and thus to criteria for program transformation. Research intensive institutions across the globe, and the governments that support them, have focused on several key solutions to meet the challenges of global

competition, revenue generation, and accountability in the form of return on investment (ROI). These solutions are encapsulated nicely by what Slaughter and Rhoades (2009, p. 11) call “academic capitalism”. Academic capitalism, according to Slaughter and Rhoades (2009) is characterized by the following key features:

- 1) It encourages commercial research, business development, and business/vocational curriculum;
- 2) It emphasizes the value of higher education for the economy, preferring “market, and market-like” activities by faculty and institutions;
- 3) It encourages increased revenue (but at lesser cost to government) through increased enrollment, raising tuition fees, switching from grants to loans, and increasing reliance on private sector, sponsored research, and income from trust funds;
- 4) It gives preference to departments and colleges with “market relevance”;
- 5) It moves away from funding basic research to funding applied and entrepreneurial research, and;
- 6) It integrates higher education planning into economic development policies.

Alan Sears does not use the term “academic capitalism”, but his analysis of the lean management strategies being widely implemented in education dovetails nicely with Slaughter and Rhoades’ assessment of academic capitalism. Sears argues that in order to be accountable and to “eliminate waste” universities are engaging in organizational rationalization, downsizing, privatization, and increased managerial control (p. 226), all hallmarks of a corporate rationality.

Polster (2009) frames the university’s orientation towards the private sphere in terms of three key areas: research, governance, and teaching. A private-sphere orientation in research is evident in terms of the kinds of research funded, how research is done (closed, competitive), and how research results are used (intellectual property ownership is very important, delayed sharing of results). The increasing use of part-time non-tenured staff to teach is a cost-cutting measure characteristic of the private sector, one intended to improve the institution’s ability to be flexible and respond to student and market needs. Also characteristic of the private sector is the switch to marketing a university degree as a commodity that is being purchased. Changes in governance from a collegial to a managerial style, a managerial staff populated largely by non-academics, increasing use of performance metrics, and increasing use of business rhetoric (clients and providers) are also hallmarks of a corporation. The increase in managerial staff is visible in a UofS employee breakdown from 2000-2011 (Appendix A) which shows all positions trended upwards very minimally, if at all, with the exception of interns and residents; administrative positions, however, doubled, from 606 to 1252 in one decade.

Dehli (2010) describes how neoliberal rationalities and practices often take shape in higher education in the form of “cost-centres and devolved budgets, enrollment target-setting, performance review, best practices, portfolio assessment, and other techniques” (p. 86). With these in mind, I turn to a review of the UofS’s most recent Integrated Plan, entitled *Promise and Potential: The Third Integrated Plan 2012-2016*, and recent institutional transformations, including a budget-related program prioritization initiative called TransformUS and the development of a new budgeting system (Transparent or Activity-Based Budget or TABBS), as a case study in how the above solutions (together which can be seen as “academic capitalism”) take shape at a particular institution.

The Third Integrated Plan emphasizes, as is to be expected, the value of higher education for the economy, stating, “public appreciation of the social and economic impacts of research and knowledge creation has never been stronger” (p. 2). Activities that increase the institution’s ability to compete in the market are emphasized, including simplifying and streamlining processes across the institution. To “[quickly react] to changing circumstances and therefore to compete with other universities in Canada and around the world requires greater nimbleness than currently exists” (p. 3). Throughout the Plan, performance metrics follow each of four key area of focus, laying out measurable outcomes that the University must achieve to be successful in that area.

In terms of finances, the IP encourages increased revenue through increased enrollment, particularly from “non-traditional” populations (Aboriginal, mature, rural, new Canadian, northern) out-of-province and international students (p. 3). There is also an increasing reliance on private sector, sponsored research, and income from trust funds.

We will continue to seek out and leverage capital funding from other [non-provincial - government] sources, such as the Government of Canada, other provincial governments, donors, private sector partners, students, entrepreneurs, and the university operating budget”. We will purpose more private sector partnerships... We expect this trend to continue (p. 18).

An increasingly managerial style of governance can be seen in the use of vigorous and unambiguous language to describe university-level expectations for colleges, schools and departments in realizing progress in knowledge creation, innovation, and impact (one of four key areas of focus in the IP). In particular, the IP sends a “dual message” to the university community: all faculty need to be productive in all areas of research and scholarship at the same or higher level than their peers at other institutions, and “we need to realize particular impact from our signature areas of research (p. 5)...leverage our investments in our signature areas of research to achieve the international recognition we desire in these areas” (p. 7). The message-sending continues later in the document: “Our university-level strategy includes the following commitments, *which we expect to be replicated* in appropriately tailored ways within the colleges, schools, and departments and *to be strongly supported by* our administrative units” (p. 6, emphasis added). That a collegial institution needs to send a message to its units via a strategic plan is, in the author’s estimation, one example of muscular management in a corporate university.

The Integrated Plan also outlines a new budgeting approach (now implemented) called Transparent, Activity-Based Budget System (TABBS). TABBS is intended to “provide better information to decision-makers throughout the university” and to “provide a framework for how colleges can meet budget targets through activity increases and revenue growth” (p. 18). This is another example of muscular management, where valuable activities are encouraged, and less valuable activities discouraged, by tying them to the College’s budget for the next year.

The Integrated Plan conveys a strong message about institutional goals and strategies to units, whilst the institution simultaneously implements metrics and reward systems to ensure

compliance with these goals. I would like to reiterate here that this discussion is not meant to imply that increased enrollment and access, research intensivity, and research revenue are not laudable goals. Rather, the discussion is intended to point out the ways in which a performative culture develops around taken-for-granted assumptions regarding what is valuable in higher education. Incentives to perform in areas deemed valuable, whether subtle or otherwise, are embedded into the fabric of the institution, from major policy documents to the budgeting process to the annual review process for faculty, and are seemingly inescapable. The purpose of this study is to explore how governmentality at all levels (macro, meso, micro) leads to tensions for faculty and how they deal with them. These will be explored below, after a discussion of TransformUS and its attendant institutional changes.

In terms of recent institutional transformations, I will be looking briefly at a process called TransformUS, undertaken in 2013 to improve accountability, transparency, and sustainability. TransformUS was a “program prioritization” initiative undertaken to support a broader move by the university to make significant long-term cost-saving adjustments to its operating budget. The intended outcome was that “the university stops doing some things and both saves and shifts significant resources” (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). Programs reviewed fell into one of two categories: academic programs, or support services. My analysis centers on the academic program review. The prioritization process followed a model proposed by Dickeson (2010) and involved: reviewing the university’s mission and defining what constituted programs at the university; selecting criteria against which all programs would be equally measured; measuring, analyzing, and prioritizing; and implementing program decisions to either invest additional resources, make no changes, or eliminate/reduce programs. The general logic informing this process is that no institution in an age of constrained resources could afford to support programs that are underperforming and/or do not hold strategic value for the institution. A committee composed primarily of university faculty developed criteria by which academic programs were to be measured. Criteria are listed in Table 1.1 (in order of weight).

Table 1.1 *Academic Programs Scoring Framework*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
Quality of outcomes (18%)	Relative quality compared to similar programs, success in faculty research/scholarly/artistic endeavors, increasing output of high quality, student success (graduation rates, hire rates, further studies)
Impact, justification, and overall essentiality (14%)	Alignment with UofS strategic directions, connections to stakeholders outside the university, and extent to which it is essential to deliver the institutional mandate
Size, scope, and productivity (12%)	Enrolment levels, teaching and research, scholarly/artistic productivity

External demand (11%)	Demand for entrance into program, and for graduates
Revenue and resources (10%)	Does the program bring in more or less prorated revenue than the average program
Internal demand (10%)	Level of service teaching and extent to which its courses are required by other programs
Costs and expenses (8%)	Does the program cost more or less than the prorated median levels
Quality of inputs (6%)	Evidence of faculty awards, entering student averages, quality of facilities, and ongoing improvement in program quality
Opportunity analysis (6%)	Potential for alignment with strategic directions, and potential for opportunities for greater efficiency and collaboration
History, Development, and Expectations (5%)	How distinguished is its history, what are its accomplishments, and what are the prospects for future impact

Program administrators across the UofS were required to fill out templates with the above information and submit them to the review committee. Programs were narrowly defined. One department could have several 3-year, 4-year, 4-year Honours, Master's, and PhD programs, and each required a template to be completed. Department resources dedicated to each program, including personnel time, had to be subdivided between each program and template for a total of 100%, requiring a perverse amount of computational contortion on the part of administrators, not to mention time. Results from the program review and deliberation were categorized into quintiles ranging from programs deserving of "Enhanced Resources" for the top-scoring quintile, to programs that should be considered for "Phasing Out, (subject to review)" for the bottom-scoring quintile. Performance metrics played a key role in program prioritization, the outcome of which was intended to help the university downsize its programs to those deemed most productive or essential to the institution. Of particular note is the extent to which market relevance featured in the review process, as captured in the second highest ranked criteria "Impact, Justification, Overall Essentiality".

TransformUS was heavily criticized internally, and was formally abandoned in the summer of 2014 amid public uproar over the firing and subsequent reinstatement of a tenured professor and Director of the School of Public Health who publicly criticized the TransformUS process and outcomes. TransformUS was an unequivocally contentious process, the impacts of which continue to reverberate across campus and the wider higher-education community. And even though TransformUS was unique in terms of its local character and implementation strategies at the UofS, the general principles informing TransformUS, and the attempt to implement those

principles is by no means unique. Other Canadian and American institutions have undertaken similar processes, as mentioned in an earlier chapter (p. 2-3), and all bear the hallmarks of a governmental rationality (in the Foucauldian sense) at the highest levels of university administration. Taken together with the Integrated Plan and the development of TABBS, TransformUS typifies academic capitalism and reflects a culture where the auditor's gaze is paramount.

This section of Chapter Three has focused on demonstrating how a performative culture can pervade all aspects of an university, from strategic policy documents, to financial processes, to program review and "renewal", revealing how the strategies to achieve performance in key areas (in this case, accountability, transparency, and sustainability) are increasingly rigid and corporate in nature. This brings me to a discussion of how these governmental technologies (institutional strategic documents and accompanying performance metrics, new funding models with built-in incentives and disincentives, and program prioritization and related review criteria) can impact individual faculty and their experiences and identities as knowledge workers. The next section outlines challenges and tensions resulting from policy changes in higher education from the highest levels to the specific institutional changes outlined above. These challenges and tensions are identified in a review of literature on academic work and working environment, and academic identity.

### 3.3 A "host of governmentalities"

I have covered in the previous chapter and above the discourse of accountability and the accompanying rhetoric of the 'innovation' or 'knowledge' society, and the material impacts this rhetoric has on the way institutions define what is valuable to them, identify problems, and conceive of and implement solutions. This section is intended to highlight the challenges these solutions pose to faculty, particularly the tensions that they engender at the individual level. Davies and Bansel (2010) describe these tensions nicely: "The individual's dilemma is that compliance with dominant discourses, practices and positions, figured as self-interest and survival, produces a tension between discourses of individualization and autonomy and de-individualization and regularization" (p. 9). The tensions between individualization and de-individualization and between autonomy and regularization underlie the current malaise faculty are experiencing in academic work, and accompany two of the major shifts in faculty work: regulation and intensification.

#### *3.3.1 Regulation and Intensification*

In terms of regulation, calls for academic units to be accountable for received resources reflect pressures at the institutional level for public postsecondary institutions to be accountable to their funders (including potential "markets") (Presley and Englebride, 1998, p. 18). The increased scrutiny of faculty activity stems from two related sources according to Presley and Englebride (p. 19): increased costs of education, and a shift in emphasis from teaching to research. These demands for accountability became increasingly urgent in the 1990's (Meyer, 1998). But governments have not been the only source of demands for increased accountability. "So-called clients and customers (students) expect service providers (faculty) to enhance their economic worth in the labour market" (Axelrod, 2002, p. 87).

Program review or prioritization and activity-based budgeting are two common institutional responses to calls for greater accountability, as discussed above. In fact, performance indicators

at the institutional and faculty levels are increasingly used as a form of “indirect rule” (Axelrod; 99). “By using these accountability mechanisms to steer at a distance, the state ensures its performance agenda is internalized by the institution, and ultimately, by academics themselves” (Grojean, in Axelrod 2002, p. 99). As Wright (2014, p. 327) reports, points systems (a form of activity-based budgeting) as a new form of governance “rely on one mechanism to try to reorder three scales of activity at once: the organization of a whole sector, the management of constituent organizations, and the “wise self-conduct” of individuals”. But regulation in the form of performance indicators, can be a double-edged sword for faculty: “Performativity works from the outside in and from the inside out. In regards to the latter, performances are, on the one hand, aimed at culture-building, the instilling of pride, identification with and ‘a love of product or a belief in the quality of the services’ provided (Willmott, 1992, p. 63). On the other hand, ratings and rankings, set within competition between groups *within* institutions, can engender individual feelings of pride, guilt, shame, and envy – they have an emotional (status) dimension, as well as (the appearance of) rationality and objectivity” (Ball, 2004, p. 145, original emphasis). A local example could be the administrative burden involved in filling out the TransformUS template for a unit. The stress involved with filling it out could be considerable, due, among other things, to concerns that program’s value may not be captured using the metrics developed, uncertainty about how the information may be understood or interpreted, and because the program’s future could be in jeopardy depending on the results.

There is considerable speculation that calls for accountability, and subsequent implementation of regulatory and review mechanisms, lead to negative changes (Welch, 2007, p. 206), or are counter-productive (Ball, 2004, p. 148). Welch describes how calls for accountability have evolved into “an international cottage industry of developing and implementing so-called quality assurance mechanisms in higher education, although in practice, many academics see little if any positive relationship between such exercises and gains in quality”. These exercises may, in fact, accompany a decline in quality as academic staff more spend time on accounting exercises and have less time for their primary duties (p. 206-207). For Ball, demands for performance can lead to fabrication – not necessarily lies - but constructed narratives for the sole purpose of having an effect; in the case of the UofS, of “saving” the department/unit:

technologies and calculations which appear to make public sector organisations more transparent may actually result in making them more opaque, as representational artefacts are increasingly constructed with great deliberation and sophistication... Within all this (some) educational institutions will become whatever seems necessary to become in order to flourish in the market. The heart of the educational product is gouged out and left empty. Authenticity is replaced by plasticity. (Ball, 2004, p. 149)

While Ball is speaking about the institutional level or departmental level, the same can be said for the individuals who are reporting, and constantly working throughout the year to construct a performance via conference presentations/publication/grant submission, etc. An example of this performative process can be seen in efforts to reframe community service as research, which as a strategy “extends and normalizes the adoption of a performative calculus” (Polster, 2012, p. 128).

Regulation of interactions is also occurring, particularly those where opinions counter to an administration’s are voiced. One example comes from St. Mary’s University in the United States where a tenured faculty member, who was also the advisor to the student newspaper, was fired



after the student newspaper published an article quoting the university president (formerly a chief executive at a private equity firm) making controversial statements about students. Other tenured faculty members who had been critical of the new president's style and initiatives were also fired citing a violation "of duty of loyalty to [the] university" (McPhate, 2016). Another home-grown example is the firing of Director Robert Buckingham at the University of Saskatchewan in response to his public criticism of the TransformUS process, which was forbidden by the sitting University president (Canadian Press, 2014). After considerable national and international uproar within the higher education community, Buckingham was subsequently reinstated (though not into his administrative position), and the University president was terminated without cause (CBC news, 2015). These are just a few examples of how a corporate mind-set of "toeing the company line" is being applied and enforced in an academic setting.

Before I move on from this discussion about regulation and accountability, I would like to acknowledge here that the requirement to "perform" has always been a part of academic life, embedded in the scholarly review process for tenure, publication, and research grants. However, it appears that the arbiters of performance are becoming, in many ways, more external and managerial in nature (as opposed to internal and collegial), and the quality and quantity of a faculty performance is evolving over time to become more rigidly defined across disciplines.

Faculty work has also intensified in terms of the volume of work, but also the nature of the tasks to be accomplished, while at the same time, supports for those tasks have been altered and in most cases reduced. A recent study for the Canadian Association of University Teachers (2007, p. 2-3) found the following:

The overall level of stress among Academic Staff employed in Canadian Universities is very high... A majority, in most cases a large majority, of respondents reported a high level of agreement with stress indicators on seven of the ten measures we used to assess stress: Work Load (85%), Work Scheduling (73%), Role Conflict (82%), Role Ambiguity (71%), Work-Life Balance (76%), Fairness-Administration (55%), Fairness-Rewards (51%).

A 2009 report by the Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta (AASUA) on academic workload and worklife found that "many respondents noted a perception of increasing workloads and time pressures, and, as a result, they no longer feel that they have sufficient time to have stimulating and idea-generating discussions with colleagues, or to seek collaborations with other researchers in their field" (p. 4). In addition:

[A]cademic staff members are expected to deliver on increasingly complex and varied expectations related to their jobs (including professional and nonprofessional administrative activities...). In part, these expectations are being driven by changes in technology, escalating accountability standards, increasing emphasis on risk management and due diligence, and some decentralization of administrative duties. For example, it is recognized that the increased ability to manage administrative tasks on-line by individual academic staff may eventually result in greater efficiencies. However, assigning responsibility for such tasks to Faculties, Departments and individuals can lead to

increased personal workloads of both administrative staff and faculty without corresponding reductions in the expectations for performance of other duties. (p. 8)

The 2012 UofS Employee Survey report shows that between 30-40% of employees<sup>2</sup> say “work volume” has been, and continues to be, a barrier to being engaged and successful in their roles (p. 27). It is clear from these reports that increased regulation and intensification of academic work are fairly standard working conditions in a modern Canadian research intensive university. These conditions are accompanied by other shifts, discussed below, that together are changing the face of academic work.

### 3.3.2 *Competition and collegiality*

Blackmore, Brennan, & Zipin (2010, p. 14) argue that education policy, “as a tool of governance, has been wielded reductively and with no questioning of the meaning, assumptions behind, or benefits of ‘innovation’, ‘knowledge economy’, etc”., and that “policy makers and institutional managers continue to push to create an entrepreneurial ethos and performative modes of being”. At the individual level, an entrepreneurial mode of being involves a shifting ethos from collegiality to competition and survivalism as a way to manage multiple modes of governance (Blackmore *et al*, 2010, p. 14). Polster (2009) highlights how entrepreneurial activities that are “potentially enriching” are being encouraged of all university staff, (e.g., ILO offices, IP specialists). It is this entrepreneurial mode of being that reflects Foucault’s concept of governmentality. Ball (2004, p. 126) describes governmentality as a force not held by someone over others, but as something we all enact everyday over ourselves and others. By enacting power, we (re)produce truths about the world. We internalize institutional processes (observation, evaluation, management, and normalization) and use them to regulate ourselves. Embracing competition (for space, funding, supports) is just one of the ways in which individual faculty internalize a corporate, competitive ethos.

A competitive ethos can also be seen between institutions, in the behaviours encouraged of academic and non-academic staff, and even between disciplines. Millem, Berger, and Dey (2000) study the reported shift in emphasis from teaching to research, as evident in increased research and writing activities of faculty in middle and lower level universities in the Carnegie Classification<sup>3</sup>. “Institutional drift” is a term they coined to describe “the attempts made by professors employed at institutions located in the middle and lower levels of the hierarchy of American postsecondary institutions to emulate the work characteristics of their peers at research universities” (p. 454). This drift can be seen at the political and institutional level in the increase of Colleges reinventing themselves as degree-granting institutions (e.g., Saskatchewan Polytechnic).

Finally, relative to competition between disciplines, Blackmore (2014, p. 94) states:

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<sup>2</sup> Note: the UofS survey does not separate out faculty from other categories of university staff.

<sup>3</sup> Carnegie Classification refers to a classification framework initially developed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to categorize post-secondary teaching institutions, based on the following six categories: “Basic (the traditional Carnegie Classification framework), Undergraduate and Graduate Instructional Program, Enrollment Profile and Undergraduate Profile, and Size & Setting” Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (n.d.).

Privileging science and technology in strategic priorities and equating STEM to innovation in most Australian higher education policies and universities have ramifications for what research is valued, and for funding distribution. It is mirrored in the proliferation of research centers and awards in science and technology and reinforced by the disposition of executive leaders.

An example of this privileging of STEM research at the UofS are the strategic priorities for research outlined by the university. These areas are promoted externally and internally via targeted start-up and matching research funding, and determine to a large extent how much institutional support (financial or otherwise) a research project will receive. These areas, described on the UofS website as “areas of outstanding achievement enabled by our research capacity, investments, history and sense of place,” are weighted heavily towards STEM disciplines: Aboriginal Peoples: Engagement and Scholarship, Agriculture: Food and Bioproducts for a Sustainable Future, Energy and Mineral Resources: Technology and Public Policy for a Sustainable Environment; One Health: Solutions at the Animal-Human-Environment Interface; Synchrotron Sciences: Innovation in Health, Environment and Advanced Technologies; Water Security: Stewardship of the World's Freshwater Resources.

Competition between disciplines for resources and for inclusion in strategic priorities at an institutional level can impact collegiality by increasing polarization between the “haves” and the “have nots” in university environments (Hanover Research Council, 2008). In their 2009 essay, Chan and Fisher describe how, as the University of Ottawa became more research intensive, faculty were pressured to secure external funding and to “contribute to knowledge production” with commercial value. These expectations, and the changing administrative and faculty roles that accompanied them (i.e. increased managerial culture) led to a decrease in solidarity and collegiality between faculty and the “commodification of space and time”. Increased competition can also create disincentives to collaborate on teaching or research because of uncertainty about where the seed money comes from, and where the research dollars will go (Hanover Research Council, 2008).

### *3.3.3 Transparency & Fairness, Identity & Autonomy*

Given the significant changes taking place in the higher education sector in general and at the UofS in particular, I felt it necessary to examine briefly the role that perceived transparency within units and institutions plays in faculty work experiences. Campbell and O'Meara (2014) found in their review of the literature that “transparency appears to play a role in faculty satisfaction and success” and that transparent decision-making was important for “faculty satisfaction and collegiality” (p. 54). Related to this, clarity and the perceived fairness of the tenure process was linked to overall satisfaction, particularly for women and minorities (Trower & Chait, 2002).

According to Archer (2008a & 2008b), an academic's identity also plays a significant role in how faculty perceive their work. She describes faculty identity as “a ‘principled’ personal project (Clegg, 2007; 17), underpinned by core values of intellectual endeavor, criticality, ethics and professionalism” (p. 397): “Professionalism was evoked as the embodying of a principled, ethical and responsible approach to work and work relationships, and they all espoused collegiality and collaboration” (Archer 2008b: p. 397).

Finally, autonomy has been a hallmark of the academic life. But this appears to be changing. A 2010 study by Sabri reveals that “until the late 1970s academics were able to benefit from public funding whilst retaining a strong degree of autonomy from governments whose stance was one of trust both for academics and the universities”. Presently, flexibility and responsiveness (key corporate requirements to maintain a competitive edge) have made their way into the university and the faculty role as well, with knowledge workers being asked to be increasingly flexible not only in *how* and *when* they do their work (making work-life balance an increasingly unattainable dream in the new intensive regime) but *in their work itself* – in how they conceptualize and tackle problems according to funding agencies’ predetermined criteria of importance and usefulness. Market values, especially financial viability, as applied to the choice of research topics challenge faculty’s freedom to choose research topics based purely on scholarly interest and expertise and thereby diminish creativity (Welch, 211).

Guerts and Maarsen (2007) argue that: “control-seeking behaviour is a characteristic of the academic profession, especially in universities. Academics not only want to be involved in the determination of their working conditions, e.g., salary, benefits, and facilities, but they also want to control the definition of their work and profession, inside their own organisation as well as in the wider regulatory, normative and cognitive context” (p. 35). Reporting results from their comparative study on European faculty’s perceptions of institutional governance, they found faculty time devoted to reporting on accountability measures and “administrivia” varied considerably, and that academics generally felt they had a high level of cognitive control. But faculty felt they had low levels of normative and regulative control over (and high dissatisfaction with) their working environment (p. 57).

If we are viewing autonomy from a Foucauldian perspective, we must acknowledge that power is not wielded just from the top down – faculty are implicated in their own subservience to market-driven expectations. For example, Newson and Polster (2009) found that despite the fact that academic autonomy is central to university and their public role, faculty autonomy is decreasing at all levels (institutional, national, international) and faculty themselves play a role in this trend by, for example, supporting use of performance measures that only recognize certain types of research outcomes and activities.

Richards Solomon describes this nicely in her discussion of “the ideological code of [academic] stars” by which faculty take-up and participate in the discourse of faculty “stars” who perform feats of productivity that are unattainable for other faculty, and against which they are constantly monitoring and gauging their own performance.

The erosion of faculty autonomy is hardly a complete process, but one thing is becoming clear – “academics as intellectuals have actually been marginalised and even erased from the language and the grammar of higher education policy documents” (Taboukou, 2012, p. 861). Now, in terms of government perceptions, “the academic has come to be obscured from view in higher education policy,” and has been supplanted by students and institutions as the “primary interlocutors” of government (p. 201). This leads to:

...a shift from what Olssen and Peters (2005, p. 328) call ‘bureaucratic or professional accountability’ towards ‘consumer or managerialist accountability’ ....Effectively,

academic expertise as a basis for accountability is undermined through the treatment of workers in higher education as a single homogeneous constituency. The academic as generic practitioner without exceptional expertise, has no power or knowledgeability that would derive from it (Sabri, 2010, p. 202).

### 3.4 Engagement

With increasing pressure to perform (or at least to perform in certain ways), increased regulation and intensification of academic work, and a decrease in the perception of academics as experts, it is not unreasonable to assume that faculty engagement could suffer as a result. I believe it is important to consider the relationship between increased accountability and engagement because engagement is widely considered an important factor in productivity (Hagedorn, 2000; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Alessandri, Borgogni, Schaufeli, 2015; Breevaart, Bakker & van den Heuvel, 2015). Given the university's focus on putting knowledge to work, it would be in the university's interest to safeguard and promote faculty engagement in the current "fish-bowl reality". Although I am critical of the current view of knowledge as a product, and the preference of Mode 2 knowledge production over Mode 1, the reality is that the university's preferences and perceptions have been established. Given this reality, I wish to understand if the current treatment of knowledge as a product could hinder the university from achieving its mandate of excellence in research and discovery. The concept of engagement also adds to my understanding of faculty's feelings about and motivation at work, and thus adds another dimension to my proposed understanding of governmentality.

Workplace engagement is a large field of study in business and psychological literature. After some review, I chose to use one model of psychological engagement at work, and one scale used to measure work engagement as reference points for my focus groups and analyses. It was important for me to understand current models of workplace engagement, but not to impose those models on academic work, which, given its long history of autonomy and creativity, and its current rapid rate of change, makes for a rather unique working environment. Both the model and the scale share essential elements, but have different emphases. There is general consensus in the supporting literature that engagement is a "harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). There is also reason to believe, given what the literature identifies as increasing work intensification, increased oversight of academic work, a decrease in autonomy, and an increase in competition, that faculty engagement could suffer.

The psychological model is from May *et al* (2004). This model has three factors that influence the "engagement of the human spirit at work". The first factor is access to physical, emotional, and intellectual resources (what May *et al* call "availability"). The work environment (what May *et al* call "safety") is the second of three major factors influencing work engagement, and consists of collegiality (see also Chan and Fisher (2008); Hanover Research Council, 2008) and supervisor relations. The final of three major factors influencing work engagement measures how important they feel their work is to them, or "meaningfulness".

The 9-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) is a three-factor scale that somewhat mirrors May *et al*'s model. According to deBruin and Henn (2013) the UWES-9's three factors include: vigor (energy for work, exhibit persistence and resilience); dedication (workers are

inspired by their work, take pride in their work, feel their work is important); and absorption (they are engrossed in their work, and have difficulty detaching from work). deBruin and Henn (2013) found that the scale itself has good external and internal validity, and is widely supported and used.

Similarities between the model and scale include key factors related to physical, emotional, and intellectual aspects of engagement, and meaningfulness of the work role. The May *et al* model emphasizes the impact of the working environment, while the UWES-9 emphasizes individual behaviours like dedication and persistence. Both models are used as frames of reference to analyze survey and focus group responses and to frame my discussion about what engagement means to faculty involved in this study. A more detailed discussion about how I implemented this follows in Chapter 4.

### 3.5 Demographic influences on faculty work experiences and identities

It is clear that there are a great many challenges facing faculty in the wake of decades of change and that adaptation to change in some form is inevitable. How the changes impact individual experiences is beginning to be explored. This section looks at demographic factors that can have an impact on how faculty experience their work and working environment. In general, Welch (2007) argues that the academic profession itself is “fractured” – there is no homogeneous experience of knowledge work; differences vary widely between third and first world institutions, between elite institutions with large endowments and state or government run institutions, and between public and private institutions (p. 207-208). At the faculty level, differences exist between teaching and research faculty, tenured and non-tenured faculty, males and females, and between disciplines (p. 207). A 2003 CAUT study found that “groups of academic staff that are most at risk of stress and strain are women and individuals between the ages of 30 and 59, faculty in tenure-track positions and those whose first language is neither English nor French” (p. 3).

Dillabough and Acker (2008) found that teaching took on a gendered form in what they called the “institutionalization of female labour”. They found an increasing emphasis on research productivity negatively affected women, especially in fields where, as Wellen (2008) puts it, “previously, professional service and connection to practice and social functions encouraged a less competitive approach” (online resource, no page number). Bornholt (2007, p. 208) found that women value teaching more, and therefore do it more while men “lean more to research, and are disproportionately represented in senior ranks”. Blackmore (2014) highlights the disenchantment and disengagement of women from participating in leadership positions due to work intensification and gendered division of academic labour. As Blackmore emphasizes, referencing Davies and Bansel (2007), “gender equity has to be understood within the context of a changing relationship between academics and the corporate university that is becoming manifest in the reluctance to lead” (p. 94).

There is some indication that age can have an effect on how faculty experience their work and work environment. For example, Gemme and Gingras (2008) looked at the impact of academic capitalism on graduate students in Quebec and found that the new generation of researchers (they looked at students in NSERC fields) was adept at negotiating university/industry demands. Findlow (2008) found that newer staff had the hardest time dealing with “mixed messages” around transparency and ideological uncertainty when faced with an innovation scheme at their

university that had rigorous requirements for monitoring, reporting, and rewarding (or not) performance. Bansel (2011), as summarized by Gough (2014: 592) found that the “neo-liberal demands of performativity make achievement as a doctoral candidate a matter of successful commodification in the form of production of work publishable by standards of academic peer review, and this will be in tension with more personal value imbued in that work and can produce trauma and subsequent ambivalence towards it”.

Archer (2008b) found that younger faculty members made sense of recent changes around accountability rather differently than their older peers. Younger (less than 35 years of age) faculty emphasized collaboration, were less nostalgic (sceptical, even) about the loss of a “Golden Age” of scholarship, and tended to respond to the tensions of their roles differently than their older peers. Archer also found that younger faculty had a very hard time conceiving of the university in any other way than what it was, and focused instead on managing themselves, their emotions, and their identity instead. And a 2007 CAUT study<sup>4</sup> found that “the youngest and oldest respondents seemed to perceive stressful events more like one another than those between 30 and 59 years of age” (p. 3).

Archer (2008a & 2008b) find that minorities experience the construction and lived experience of academic identity differently from non-minorities. “Younger academics from minority ethnic and working-class backgrounds...find it particularly difficult to inhabit identities of success/authenticity with any sense of permanence or legitimacy. That is, they must negotiate on a daily basis not only their attempts at ‘becoming’ but also the threat of ‘unbecoming’” (2008a: p. 401). Given the discussion in the preceding chapters about the preference at the government and institutional policy level for STEM-related and applied disciplines, there is reason to believe faculty in STEM disciplines may experience their working environment differently than their non-STEM peers. Finally, Zipin (2010) found that faculty in administrative positions feel calls for accountability keenly and can experience significant anxiety as a result of calls to ensure performance in their unit.

In my analysis, I look for differences between men and women, between younger and older faculty (which I define in Chapter 4), and between those who identify as having English as their Second Language (ESL), visible minorities, and faculty of Aboriginal status, current or former administrators, and those without these characteristics.

### 3.6 Reactions to tensions

Drawing on Deci and Ryan’s process of internalization as a general guide for categorization purposes, I scanned the literature on faculty reactions to the tensions engendered by the discourse of accountability in higher education policies and their work. For these authors, “thought of as a continuum, the concept of internalization describes how one’s motivation for behaviour can range from a motivation or unwillingness, to passive compliance, to active personal commitment” (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p. 60). I rely in this thesis on Deci and Ryan’s concept of an individual’s self-determination as a continuum on which external motivations can be internalized and assimilated to the self (p. 620). Their work is the psychological analog (or perhaps an accompanying ‘how-to’ guide) to Foucault’s notion of governmentality. While Foucault

presents a holistic, overarching theory of how power and knowledge interact to govern faculty via governmental technologies (e.g., the annual report), Deci and Ryan provide an up-close look at the ways in which individuals respond to governmental technologies and in many cases become self-governing (e.g., eschewing activities that will not be presented in the annual report).

Looking to the literature for examples of faculty responses to challenges and tensions, and where these responses might fall in the continuum of self-determination as presented by Deci and Ryan, I did not encounter any descriptions of faculty's unwillingness to continue to pursue their career as an academic. Tamboukou (2012), however, observes evidence of retreatism where she describes academic escapism or "withdrawal from public academic spaces into archives, libraries, and private studies" as a "survival tactic" for "dark times" in the academy (p. 860-861).

The literature reveals little evidence that passive compliance was a reaction by faculty in response to a discourse of accountability with the exception of Wilson and Holligan's (2013) finding that "in spite of the negative perceptions of performativity and its impact on the work environment, there was little evidence of resistance, except in the case of staff with a predominantly teaching background" (p. 23).

Most faculty appear to comply to some extent with demands for accountability placed on them. But they seldom do so passively. I add here a category to Deci and Ryan's suite of behavioural responses to a discourse of accountability – that of resistance. According to McWilliam (2004), "one of the most difficult issues to address is that it is not possible for anyone to sit outside the performance culture and still be a valued player in a particular area of university activity" (p. 161). But there is no reason why academics cannot get creative within the accountability framework. As McWilliam, states, "contradiction, conflict, and maverick conduct seem to be as important to intellectual life as they are anathema to the audit exercise" (p. 161).

Archer 2008b (neoliberal subjects) offers a great example of a study of resistance, finding that all of her study participants engaged in some level of "resisting, challenging and/or protecting themselves from the insatiable demands of contemporary higher education, with its fast tempo and incessant requirement to produce" (p. 276). Resistance took one of five forms: safety through playing the game (e.g., successful grantsmanship); speaking out; creation of supporting practices (e.g., female faculty creating support groups); self-protection through work on the psyche (e.g., lowering expectations for what they can achieve while maintaining their academic integrity), and; being otherwise (creating firm boundaries between work and life). I interpret these responses rather differently than McWilliam, and argue that playing the game, being otherwise, and engaging in self-protection through work on the psyche, are forms of semi-compliance, bound with some form of resistance. They do what they need to do to be successful without buying wholesale into the rhetoric. For instance, Findlow (2008) documents the use of ambivalence or subversion (playing semiotic games) in which faculty adopt the language and procedures of accountability but also practice subversion by "slip[ping]" critical work that is meaningful to them personally into an approved project. Another such example is from Wright (2014, p. 329) who outlines how Danish universities, after implementing a points-based system for allocating funding, "expected academic to respond by doing enough of "what counts" to create a protective carapace under which they could continue to do "what matters". Yet another way faculty seek to wrest some control over their work and working environment is through



participating in voluntary governance mechanisms and exercises (Guerts and Maassen, 2007, p. 35).

At the far end of the behavioural spectrum from unwillingness is active personal commitment. Bansel and Davies (2010, p. 144) found that “the individual whose ideas are in many ways antithetical to neoliberalism, and who is most vulnerable to it, is the one who will work at making neoliberal forms of government work, not through any love of neoliberalism, but through a love of what neoliberalism puts at risk”. Sears has documented extensively how faculty have taken on a “lean ethos” (2003, p. 115), internalizing the need for entrepreneurship and innovation.

### 3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has been devoted to reviewing how faculty members’ work and working environment have been impacted by institutional changes informed by an accountability discourse, and how faculty are responding in turn. I explored the change in values occurring in the higher education sector, with corporate universities become the standard for research-intensive universities. Relative to this wider change in values, I highlight how these changes are seen at the local level, and discuss the UofS’s uptake of corporate practice and ethos, and valuing of knowledge that “works” and knowledge products (material or otherwise) that can be measured. I discuss how key challenges are defined by the UofS primarily in terms of competition, revenue generation, accountability, and relevance (particularly “return on investment”). Academic capitalism is the UofS’s (and many others’) chosen response to the challenges outlined above. I then outline the change in behaviours that take place within a corporate university, and demonstrate how a performative culture can pervade all aspects of an university, from strategic policy documents, to financial processes, to program review and “renewal”, and how the strategies to achieve performance in key areas (in this case, accountability, transparency, and sustainability) are increasingly rigid and corporate in nature.

A change in the work experience of university faculty accompanies the change in values and behaviours described above. New challenges and tensions emerge, largely related to whether and how much individual faculty “take-on” new discourses of accountability. Two pervasive challenges are regulation and intensification. Regulation comes in the form of the usual annual review and promotion process, but also in performance review, the increased use of performance indicators, and administrative attempts to squelch individual faculty’s contrary opinions to official institutional activities or positions on certain topics. Intensification has occurred in the volume, nature, and complexity of faculty’s work. These challenges and tensions are not experienced in the same way by all faculty; for instance women have become disengaged from participating in leadership positions, and younger faculty from minority ethnic or working class backgrounds can find it difficult to “inhabit” an identity as an “authentic” academic (Archer 2008a, p. 401). Faculty’s responses to these challenges and tensions can range from withdrawal to personal commitment, highlighting the complexity of the ways in which individual faculty internalize and respond to the dominant discourses around accountability.

## 4. Research Questions, Methodology, and Methods

### 4.1 Research Questions

In Chapter Three I highlighted the many demands being placed on research-intensive universities, and the impact these demands can have on faculty's work life and their experiences as scholars. Welch (2007, p. 213) examined similar issues, asking if there exists a new academic milieu, resulting from the changes over the past several decades. He does not arrive at a firm conclusion, arguing that the academic stands at a "crossroads". This study picks up on this line of questioning and builds on the reviewed literature by asking the following three sets of questions.

With the increase in regulation and intensification of faculty work, and the myriad governmentalities that enact these changes on a daily basis, my first question asks: What is the current "face" of scholarship at the University of Saskatchewan?

1. What are faculty members' perceptions of their work and their working environment?
2. What are the principal challenges they face? What tensions are they experiencing?
3. What do faculty believe constitutes engagement in a faculty role, and do they see themselves as engaged?

My second set of questions emerges from the literature on faculty identity and the changing profession, asking: How do faculty respond to challenges and tensions inherent in changes in higher education?

1. How does the higher education context affect how they feel about their role and their work, their values, goals, and motivations?
2. Do they "do" their work differently in response to these changes?
3. Do the challenges and tensions they face impact their relationships with their colleagues and their willingness to collaborate?

My third research question is exploratory and broadens the discussion from changing faculty work to one of collective scholarly identity and institutional mission, asking: What do the findings mean for the ability of the University to fulfill its scholarly mandate. That is, referring directly to the UofS mission statement, can faculty perceptions and responses of changes in their work impact the University's ability to "achieve excellence in the scholarly activities of teaching, discovering, preserving and applying knowledge"?

### 4.2 Methodology

This research project is a case study of faculty members within three Colleges at the University of Saskatchewan (Arts and Sciences, Engineering, and Nursing) using mixed-methods and a triangulation design. I have chosen these three colleges because they represent applied and non-applied disciplines, and male dominated, female dominated, and mixed populations. I have chosen a triangulation design because of the complexity of the subject matter, which can be better understood using multiple data sources. The quantitative and qualitative data gathered in this study are mutually supporting, as they are largely investigating the same phenomena (perceptions and experiences of faculty work) and are given equal weight (Sandelowski, 2000) in data analysis and interpretation. Focus groups are largely exploratory, and somewhat complementary in that they are used in a few cases to follow up on unexpected findings from the

survey. A triangulation design and mixed methods help me paint a nuanced picture of faculty members' perceptions of their work and working environment.

Limitations of this methodology are that it prevents generalizability to any organization beyond the university, and possibly to non-sampled Colleges within the university, although the sample obtained closely resembles that of the UofS faculty population as a whole. In terms of validity, it is also possible that, although respondents are demographically representative of the wider UofS population (see below), they could hold different attitudes or beliefs than their non-responding peers that would make them more likely to participate in the study. While there was remarkable consistency of responses on some key topics (e.g., increasing intensiveness in their work), this was not the case on other topics, leading me to believe that the sample was not a homogeneous group in terms of their attitudes and responses to changes in work. Also, there was little in my results that was contradictory to findings from previous studies. For instance, my findings confirm reports of the regulation and intensification of faculty work, the importance of academic work to faculty's identity, and the dominance of obtaining research funding and publication as signifiers of performance. Finally, given that I am part of the wider academic community I am surveying, I also referred to my own experiences as a student and staff member at the University. I believe that my past and current experiences, plus the experience of my advisory committee, position me well to flag anything that might seem unusual or unlikely.

In terms of reliability, it is possible that opinions may change over time, and given the temporal proximity of my survey to the TransformUS project that was being undertaken (and then stopped), it is possible that faculty might feel differently now that some time has passed. That said, most of the survey and focus group content were not focused on TransformUS, but on broader, more long-standing changes that the passage of time is unlikely to heavily impact.

#### 4.3 Methods

Survey data are used to “describe attitudes, beliefs, and opinions” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 22), and provide primarily quantitative and descriptive data on faculty members' perceptions of their working environment, their work, demographic information, and the extent to which they are aligned (consciously or not) with institutional values and expectations. Survey data are also used to measure the relationships between faculty demographic characteristics and their perceptions of their work and their workplace. One exception to the quantitative format is a series of two questions used to measure one of the study's key variables: engagement. I chose the online survey method because it would allow me to reach every faculty member easily, it would be convenient for most faculty who are on their computers or phones on a regular basis, and it would give them time to reflect on their responses or pause and return later to the survey, if they were short on time. Where possible questions were drawn from previous studies reported in the literature (e.g., National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta surveys, or the University of Saskatchewan Employee Opinion Survey). Where appropriate questions did not exist, I developed them.

The first of my two qualitative questions in the survey is open-ended and asks the respondent to think of a colleague or someone they know who they think is engaged in their work, and asks them to describe the qualities and activities that they believe characterize that individual as “engaged”. This question is intended to get them to think deeply about what they believe

constitutes engagement in a faculty role. This is then followed up by a question asking them to rate whether or not they consider themselves to be engaged on a 5-point Likert scale. The second qualitative question is a follow-up for those who responded that their work is intensifying. It asks the respondent to describe in what ways their work has intensified.

The surveys were sent directly to all faculty in the three Colleges by email and was available for completion between January 27<sup>th</sup> and February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, with a reminder one week before I removed the survey from the server. No incentive was given for participation. I received 109 respondents in total, before filtering out nine non-eligible respondents for a response rate of 100, or 10% of the population. Ten percent is a low response rate, but given the time-crunch that faculty are reporting, I feel this is probably not unreasonable. I also feel positively about the representativeness of the survey respondents, which enables me to draw some preliminary conclusions from the data. Adjunct professors, lecturers, and librarians were filtered out of the responses because expectations in their roles differ significantly than other faculty, particularly in terms of expectations to undertake research. Survey respondent characteristics are provided in detail below. I used SNAP survey software and their United Kingdom-based hosting services (ISO 27001 certified), and SPSS data analysis software to gather, store, and analyze my data. The mean time to complete the survey was 17.37 minutes.

The second method of data collection is focus groups, which I constituted by inviting survey respondents to participate and discuss in further detail their experiences with and perceptions of recent changes in higher education and their work. There were no incentives provided for focus group participation. Twenty-six respondents agreed to participate in the focus groups, of which 24 were eligible (two were lecturers). After a difficult time trying to coordinate schedules, 14 participants in total were scheduled for 3 separate focus groups. In all, 11 participants took part, after three cancelled with short notice due to calendar conflicts. I made every effort to ensure people from STEM-based disciplines were in one focus group and non-STEM disciplines in the others. Focus groups were held on March 2, 2015 (two focus groups) and March 11, 2015 (one focus group), and included 11 individuals from all three Colleges, representing most ranks and all tenure statuses, women and men, and visible minorities.

All focus groups were held in a private meeting room on the university campus, on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Arts Building, which is a part of campus that does not contain or is not close to offices where administrators or administrative staff are located. Consent forms were reviewed and signed at the start of each focus group.

Focus group data are used to validate the survey data, to provide context and nuance in my interpretation of the survey data, and to provide additional qualitative data on individual faculty experiences. In particular, focus group data are used to understand how faculty respond to challenges and tensions inherent in higher education changes, how they feel about their role and their work, and whether they are “doing” their work differently as a result. In other words, I seek to understand how the imposition of structural changes and organizational values impacts individual experiences, and how individuals make sense of these dynamics. In this sense then, I am not seeking to describe any particular social “truth” related to a homogeneous faculty experience, but rather to understand how different individuals make sense of, and act on,

structural and organizational changes in higher education, and whether there are any similarities or patterns that emerge from these individual stories.

#### 4.3.1 Survey Variables and Measurement

With the exception of the demographic questions and one open-ended question about engagement, responses are presented as a Likert scale: Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree. The full survey tool with questions and responses is available in Appendix B. I describe below the contents of each section, providing details about topics that have not already been covered in the previous chapters.

The survey began by asking respondents about their role at the university: department, faculty title, tenure status, job title, and year of first FT faculty position (at their current or any other university).

The second section includes questions about respondents' perceptions of their work itself: clarity of institutional expectations, congruence of personal expectations with institutional expectations, how they spend and wish they spend their time, meaningfulness of their work (May, 2004), autonomy (Newson and Polster, 2009; Guerts and Maarsen, 2007), motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), work intensification (CAUT, 2007; AASUA, 2009; Welch, 2007), what they consider to be "engagement" in a faculty role (May, 2004), and whether or not they are engaged (May, 2004).

Clarity is measured in terms of whether respondents understand institutional expectations around how they are to spend their time, and what is required to achieve tenure. I also measure what I am calling congruence – that is, whether, and to what extent, respondents are aligned with institutional expectations around accountability - specifically: how they spend their time and how they wish to spend their time; whether the scholarly activities they value "count", and; whether the volume of documentation required to demonstrate performance is reasonable; whether they feel their discipline is valued by the university.

When measuring engagement, I asked participants to define what engagement looked like in their own words, outlining the qualities or characteristics an engaged faculty member has.

The third survey section deals with respondents' perceptions of their work environment: collegiality and competition (Blackmore *et al*, 2010; Hanover Research Council, 2008; May, 2004; Sears, 2003; Dehli, 2010; Zipin, 2010; Chan & Fisher, 2008; Hanover Research Council, 2008), their department's work-life balance (CAUT 2007; Campbell & O'Meara, 2014), satisfaction with compensation, departmental tolerance for boundary pushing, fairness of the tenure and promotion process (Trower & Chait, 2002), and transparency of resource allocation and salary increases (Campbell & O'Meara, 2014).

The fourth section collects information on respondents' access to resources. They include measures of resources that are related to: work; professional development (Campbell and O'Meara, 2014); time; emotional and physical resources (May, 2004); distractions outside of work; resources outside of work, role models in their unit (Campbell and O'Meara, 2014), and; collaboration (Archer, 2008).

The final section collects demographic information about the respondents' sex, year of birth, highest degree, year they were granted their highest degree, and minority status.

Based on previous research (covered in Chapter 3) and some speculation, I use the following demographic variables as controls: sex; age; discipline; rank; tenure status; year of first fulltime faulty position; year of highest degree; administrative role; English as a second language (ESL); visible minority status; and Aboriginal status.

#### 4.3.2 Focus Group questions

Focus groups followed a semi-structured process in which I asked questions from the prepared guide (see Appendix C), and followed up as needed to clarify responses. I developed the questions for the focus group guide from two sources. The first was the literature that I reviewed for this paper, where I identified themes that I wished to follow up on (e.g., the changing nature of the academic working environment and its impact on faculty work). The second source to inform the development of focus group questions was the survey responses. After doing some preliminary analysis of survey data, I created some questions for the focus group to clarify or further develop concepts or statements that were made via the surveys.

The focus groups started with a general question about what participants thought were some of the most important changes in higher education in the last few decades. This question was intended to stimulate discussion and to encourage respondents to start thinking broadly about the topic of changes in higher education. I circulated a list of tensions (Appendix D) that were identified from my literature review, and asked participants to discuss them. Did the listed items resonate with them, and was I missing anything? Participants then discussed their working environment and their work, and how they felt about their work given the changes and tensions we had discussed earlier.

The focus groups flowed very well, and respondents naturally moved from one topic to the other with little need for prompting. This is likely due to the inter-related nature of the questions and participants' significant interest in the subject matter. Throughout the discussions, I was open to unexpected responses, pursuing topics that were relevant but were not included in the focus group guide. All three focus groups took the full 90 minutes of allotted time, and could have gone longer given participants' high level of engagement.

#### 4.4 Analysis

Survey data analysis is primarily descriptive and correlational, and for every survey question (except demographic questions) I controlled for key theoretically-informed variables such as sex, discipline, rank, ESL status, minority status, Aboriginal status, administrative experience, and discipline (a derived variable described below). After reviewing preliminary analyses, I chose to use rank in lieu of age as a control variable because they appeared to have a similar influence and rank seemed to be the determining factor given its relationship to access to resources and other important working conditions. Control variables are only discussed when they had a significant relationship with the independent variable being reported.

Because my survey uses a Likert scale format, my data are predominantly ordinal in nature. I therefore use non-parametric reporting measures including bar charts, contingency tables, chi-

square tests, contingency coefficients, and, where appropriate, a Kruskal-Wallis test to compare ranks across 3 categories, or a Mann-Whitney test to compare ranks across 2 categories. The Kruskal Wallis test is, in the most simple terms, an ANOVA for non-parametric (i.e., non-normally distributed) variables. A .05 level of significance is used throughout. A Mann-Whitney test is the non-parametric analog to the t-test. When used as a post-hoc test for the Kruskal-Wallis test, the level of significance used is .05/number of tests.

Derived variables include one to categorize disciplines into three categories for analysis, as shown in Table 4.1, based on categorizations on the SSHRC website as well as the College websites at the University of Saskatchewan. Derived variables also include demographic variables for the decade of highest degree, decade of first fulltime faculty position, and age. Two variables were created for age, inspired by Archer's (2008) study of "younger (< 35 years of age) faculty. The first had two age categories - under 50, and 50 or over – and the second had three categories - 40 or under, 41 to 50, and over 50 - but neither proved to have a significant impact on the results. A binary variable was created for those who are, or have been, in an administrative role and those who have not.

Table 4.1 *Categorization of Disciplines into Three Categories*

<b>STEM</b>	<b>Social &amp; Health Science</b>	<b>Humanities or Fine Arts</b>
Biology	Archaeology & Anthropology	Art & Art History
Biomedical Engineering	Economics	Drama
Chemistry	Geography and Planning	English
Chemical and Biological Engineering	Native Studies	History
Civil and Geological Engineering	Nursing	Languages, Literatures, and Culture
Computer Science	Political Studies	Music
Electrical and Computer Engineering	Psychology	Philosophy
Geological Sciences	Graham School of Prof. Dev.	Religion and Culture
Mathematics and Statistics	Sociology	
Mechanical Engineering		
Physics and Engineering Physics		

In order to measure what I am calling “congruence”, that is, alignment of individual and institutional values, I developed exploratory, proxy measures, asking three questions about: 1)

whether the scholarly activities they feel are important “count” for tenure/promotion/merit; whether they felt the volume of documentation required to demonstrate performance is reasonable, and; whether they feel the discipline they are currently working in is valued by the university. Because faculty work is so deeply personal, it was important to understand the extent to which faculty values align with institutional values. Doing so helps me contextualize at least some of the feelings of being overwhelmed that faculty are experiencing. It could also offer a general sense of the degree to which governmentality is occurring, and the range of motivations that may be exhibited by participating faculty. A composite variable was created, summing the three measures of congruence, and reverse coding them, so a so a high score means high congruence. The same process was followed with measures of collegiality, where three items were summed and then reverse-coded so a high score equals high collegiality.

Analysis of focus group transcripts centers on identifying themes in the data related to the theories being drawn on for this study. Specifically, I focus on: 1) faculty’s identification of biggest changes, challenges, and tensions in higher education and research intensive institutions, particularly as they are related to increasing calls for accountability and related technologies of governance (increased reporting, particular types of knowledge valued, particular sources of funding valued, increased management of time/work); 2) the extent to which they “take-on” institutional values and goals (accountability, competition, alignment with institutional and federal values and goals regarding scientific knowledge, etc.), and; 3) how the process of negotiating these tensions impacts their work, how they feel about their role, and their relationships with their colleagues.

Using NVivo software for my qualitative analysis, I developed a basic, tentative coding scheme based on themes I expected to find after a review of the literature (increasing administrative work, teaching vs. research, etc.) and then revised these as I continued the analysis, developing subcategories or new codes as needed (see Appendix E for a complete list of codes, or “Nodes” as they are called in NVivo). Throughout the analysis and reflection process, I watched for potential differences in experiences and perceptions of men and women, minorities, younger (<35 years of age) faculty members, and faculty of different ranks and disciplines.

With few exceptions, I did not transform qualitative data into quantitative data, or vice versa, during the analysis and interpretation phase of this study. Rather, I report findings for my research questions using the most appropriate type(s) of data, which might be quantitative, qualitative, or both. Where available and relevant, I provide qualitative quotes or summaries to confirm or qualify the findings from the quantitative data (Cresswell & Clark, 2007, p. 140).

To protect participant anonymity, pseudonyms are used throughout, and departments are not identified. Quotes have been edited for readability.

#### 4.5 Characteristics of survey respondents’ and focus group participants

Data about faculty demographics at the UofS, obtained on March 25, 2015 from staff of the UofS About-US HR Information Management System office, are used here to contextualize the survey respondents’ characteristics on key variables. Survey respondents’ characteristics closely match key demographic categories of UofS faculty including sex, rank, and tenure status (Table 4.2), and age (Figure 4.1).

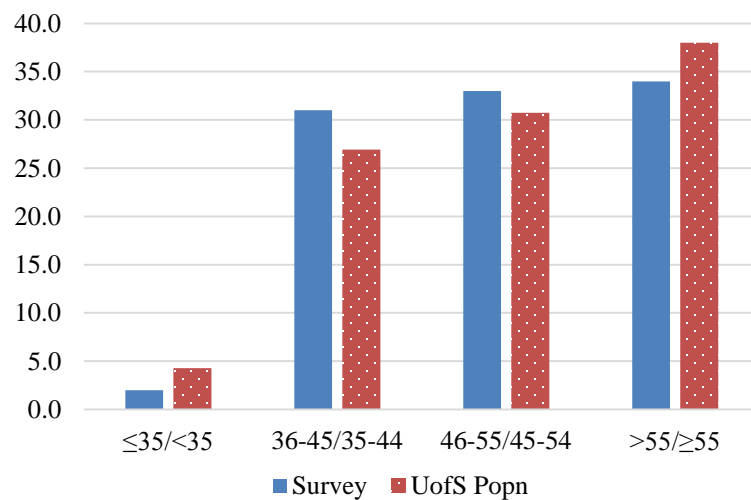


Table 4.2 *Faculty by sex, rank, and tenure status in the survey sample and at the UofS (%)*

Category	Subcategory	Survey sample	UofS
Sex	Female	36%	39%
	Male	64%	61%
Rank	Assistant Professor	23%	30%
	Associate Professor	39%	31%
	Professor	36%	39%
	Professor Emeritus	2%	Not available
Tenure Status	Tenured	79%	87% (932 of 1074)
	Tenure track (continuing)	19%	6% (63 of 1074)
	Not tenure track	2%	7% (79 of 1074)

Respondents' ages matched fairly closely those of the UofS faculty population. I used different age-range brackets than did the UofS, so I combined categories in both data sets to generate approximate comparison categories (e.g., 36-45 vs. 35-44), as seen in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 *Faculty by age range in the survey sample and UofS population (%)*



The vast majority (93%) of respondents had a doctoral degree (Figure 4.2). One in five respondents were from a humanities and fine arts discipline, with the rest split almost evenly between social or health sciences and STEM disciplines (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2 *Faculty by highest degree in survey sample*

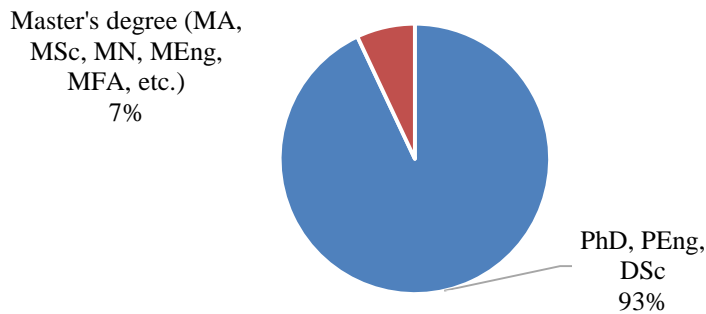
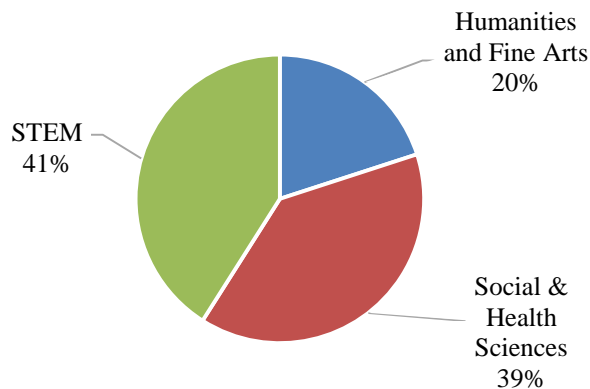


Figure 4.3 *Faculty by discipline in survey sample*



Focus group participants included tenured and non-tenured faculty, all ranks, all Colleges included in the survey, administrative and non-administrative faculty, males and females, and visible minorities.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

I have endeavored to show in the preceding literature review that governmentality is evident in all facets of university life. This chapter has laid out for the reader my chosen methodology and methods to examine how governmentality, in the form of an accountability discourse, is impacting faculty work. The next chapter begins to review my study findings starting with my first set of research questions: What is the current “face” of scholarship, given the host of governmentalities discussed in Chapter Three? What are their perceptions of their working environment? What does engagement mean to faculty?

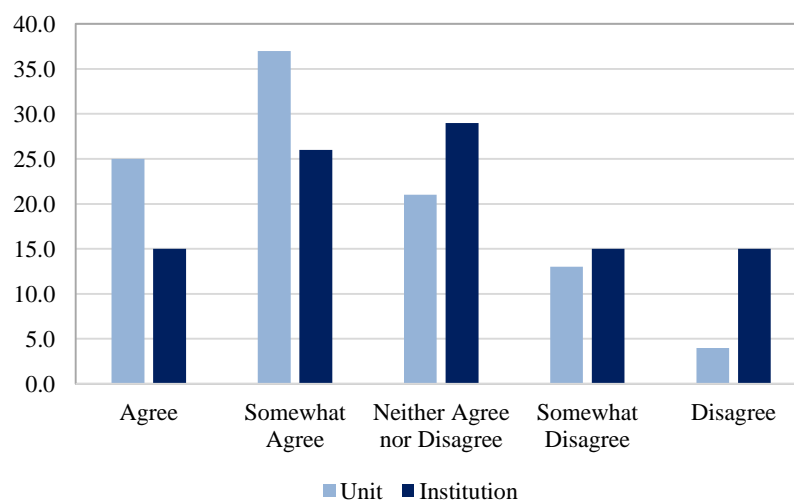
## 5. The “Face” of Scholarship and the Performative Ethos

In this chapter I present the results for survey questions related to faculty members’ work and working environment, and their perceptions of engagement. I also present quotes from the focus groups, where relevant, to further illuminate the topic at hand. The reader is reminded that qualitative and quantitative data were gathered with different objectives and are given equal weight in this study. The purpose of the surveys was primarily to be able to describe faculty’s perceptions of their work and working environment, while the focus groups were undertaken primarily to understand perceptions of changes in their work environment and how they feel and act in response. It is also important to note that I report here *only* the results of significant relationships with key control variables outlined in the previous chapter. If a control variable is not mentioned in the description of the quantitative results, it had no significant effect on the dependent variable.

### 5.1 Perceptions of work environment

I begin with the perceptions by faculty members of their work environment including competition, collegiality, and kinship. Three-quarters (77%) of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that “as an academic, competition is just part of the job”. A majority (a total of 71%) of respondents also agreed or somewhat agreed that they “don’t mind competition”. Of those, however, 35% *somewhat* agreed, qualifying their agreement. Given the competitive environment for funding for research and scholarly work<sup>5</sup>, and the significant importance placed on such funding for advancement, these findings are not surprising. Faculty accept competition as part of the scholarly landscape and, for the most part, have made peace with it. When asked about competition for resources, faculty felt they were stronger competitors for resources at the unit level than at the institutional level where the competition is fiercer (Figure 5.1).

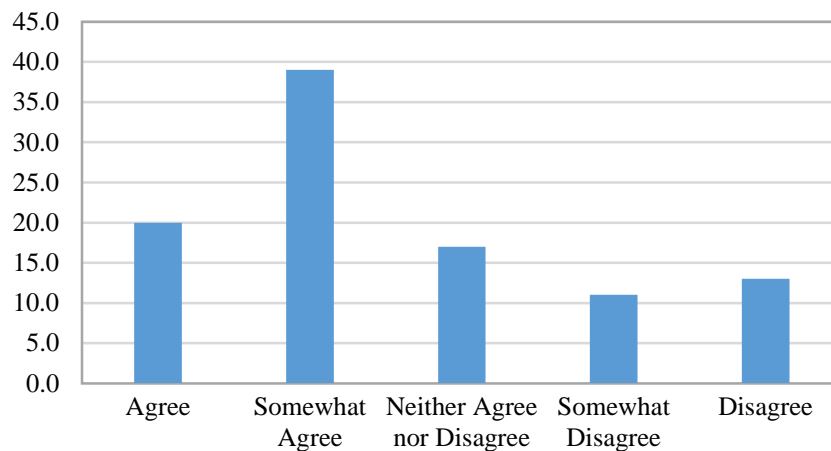
Figure 5.1 Responses to “I feel I am a strong competitor for resources in my..”. (%)



<sup>5</sup> As an example, the UofS the salary structure includes an annual “competition” for award of merit.

Archer (2008b) found that collegiality and collaboration were reported by faculty to be essential elements of faculty work. So it was promising to discover that 82% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed to the statement “my colleagues and I have mutual respect for one another”. Just over one in ten (12%) disagreed or somewhat disagreed. Somewhat less promising, while 59% agreed or somewhat agreed that they felt a “kinship” with their colleagues, almost one in four respondents disagreed or somewhat disagreed (See Figure 5.2). This distinction– that of respect versus kinship, of feeling they do the same work versus the notion that they have a family-like division of labour – has implications for the university’s efforts to build a sense of community and collective identity.

Figure 5.2 Responses to “I feel a real “kinship” with my colleagues (%)



When asked whether they trusted their colleagues, 25% of respondents agreed, and 42% somewhat agreed that they trusted their colleagues. Almost one in four somewhat disagreed or disagreed with the statement. The percentage of faculty that somewhat trust, or do not trust, their colleagues was higher than I expected. One could hypothesize many causal factors that might influence these responses, from the competitive environment for resources to the contentious and TransformUS process, or perhaps the perceived lack of institutional transparency. This could also reflect the value given to individualistic behavior in the university reward system (e.g., how many articles are sole authored is particularly important for faculty going up for tenure). These questions, however, will have to wait for future investigation. Here, however, is one quote from a tenured faculty member named Rafiq<sup>6</sup> that sheds some light on the way the granting process encourages collaboration but may not always lead to collegiality:

[Prior to choosing an academic career path] I’m understanding and reading about what the university is and [how] the public holds this university in such great esteem and its professors...So I was one of these consumers of the doctrine, if you will, of what this university, what this institution stands for. So [I came in] naïve...[s]o when I came I was in a bit of shock actually at the behaviours...Collegiality? It’s not about that. It’s about ‘Oh,

<sup>6</sup> This is a reminder that pseudonyms are used throughout.

come on, [Rafiq] I need you to get that because I need your writing skills...I want you on my grant but you're going to be down here as a collaborator and I'm going to be up here as the PI because you have all these skills and you're going to contribute, you're going to do all this but you're getting nowhere with that because it's all about me.' These are the kinds of things that I have lived and I'm appalled.

### *5.1.1 Unit work culture*

Responding to reports of the decline in faculty autonomy (Newson and Polster, 2009) I asked faculty about their perceived autonomy and work-life balance. Reported levels of autonomy were relatively high, with 49% respondents agreeing and 42% somewhat agreeing that they have the freedom to develop projects and undertake activities that they think are important (See Figure 5.3). I was somewhat surprised that 42% of respondents offered qualified agreement (as opposed to total agreement) to the statement about autonomy. Given the long tradition of autonomous working habits associated with academic roles, this represented a point of interest for me, and I explore it later on in Chapters Seven and Eight where I discuss faculty's working conditions and the important role they play in helping the university fulfill its scholarly mandate.

Reported leadership styles varied between units, and this impacted faculty's perceptions of autonomy, as seen in the following excerpt:

- I: So it does sound like there's big differences in terms of how interdisciplinarity is –  
R1: Yeah, is viewed and –  
I: - almost, implemented...  
R1: Yes.  
R2: It's facilitated in my college and it's implemented in yours, isn't that –  
R1: Yeah, well these are leadership styles right.  
R2: That's right, that's right.  
R1: These are the leadership approaches and styles that we begin to talk about. It's inducing rather than, you know, and implementing, rather than having people actually come together and take ownership and supporting that. This is what leadership is supposed to be about right.

The respondents highlight in this quote how some leaders foist interdisciplinarity onto their faculty, while others facilitate it and allow faculty to take ownership over interdisciplinary activity, leaving faculty with a sense of autonomy. Incidentally, this is a fine example of the difference between Foucault's notion of sovereign power and disciplinary power (a more prevalent form of power in modern life), with the former being mandated via decree, and the other being embedded into language and behaviours via a common value system. That said, I suggest that both approaches diminish autonomy, since both leadership styles result in interdisciplinarity being instituted; the difference is the faculty are more complicit in their governance in one scenario than the other.

Only half of respondents thought their department had a culture that supported a good work-life balance with just over half (54%) of respondents agreeing or somewhat agreeing that they are satisfied with their department's culture around work-life balance, and 31% somewhat disagreeing or disagreeing (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.3 “I have the freedom to develop projects and undertake activities that I think are important” (%)

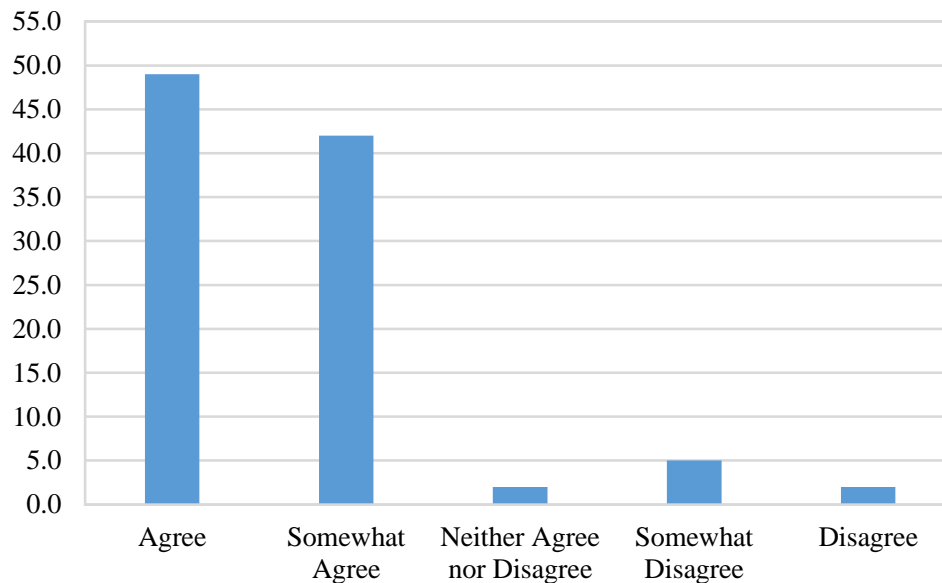
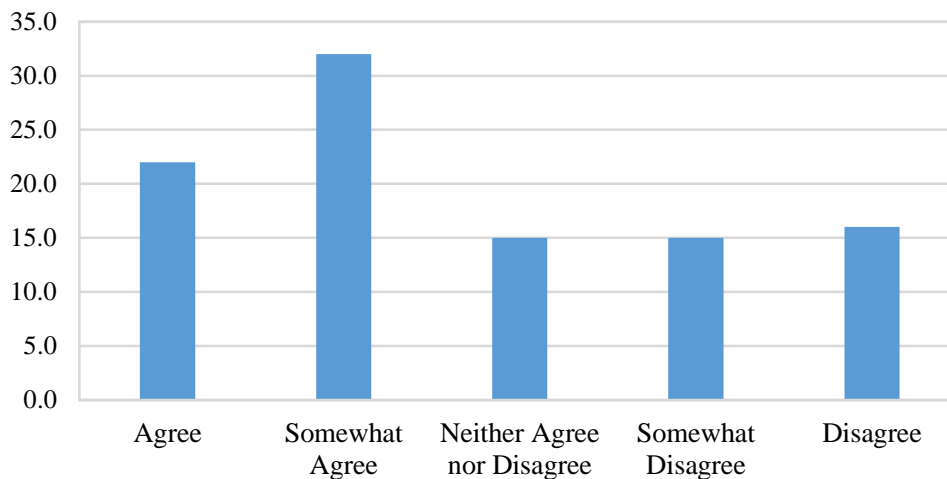


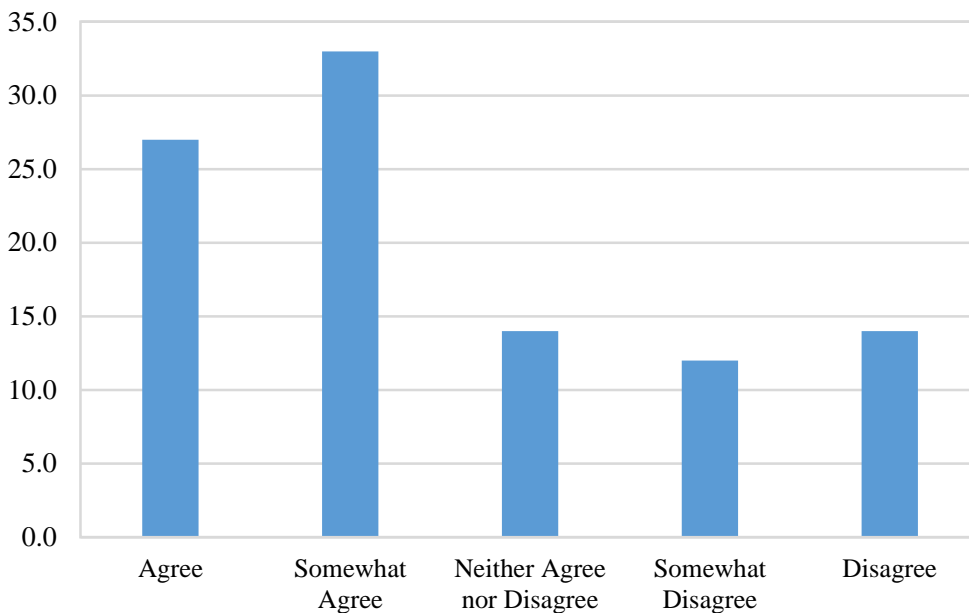
Figure 5.4 I am satisfied with my department's culture around work-life balance (%)



Also related to faculty’s working environment, 60% of survey respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that colleagues doing work that might be considered atypical or “boundary pushing” for their discipline are supported by their department. One in four (26%) somewhat disagreed or disagreed (see Figure 5.5). Of those who disagreed or somewhat disagreed, 46% were from STEM disciplines, 42% were from Social or Health Sciences, and only 12% were from the Humanities or Fine Arts. I discuss in some depth what these perceptions of support for boundary pushing work might mean for the university’s innovation mandate in Chapter Eight, but will say

here that a lack of support for this type of work could lead to a lack of innovation, an important academic goal for the UofS.

Figure 5.5 *Colleagues doing work that might be considered atypical or “boundary-pushing” for my discipline are supported by my department (%)*



### 5.1.2 Transparency and Fairness

Given the ubiquitous discourse of improving transparency in order to be more accountable, I wanted to understand whether faculty felt their units and institutions were transparent. At the unit level, 55% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that resource allocation in their unit was transparent (see Figure 5.6). Almost one in three somewhat disagreed or disagreed. The perceived lack of transparency is elevated at the institutional level, with only 23% agreeing or somewhat agreeing that resource allocation at the institutional level is transparent, while 60% somewhat disagreed or disagreed. As Mark said: “We’re all supposed to be metrically driven and all that. But it is damn near impossible to get the data. You know, it’s another example of how you’re being asked to do something without the supports in place to allow you to actually do it.” A specific example of this perceived lack of transparency at the institutional level was the relatively quick shift made by the University from a projected \$44.5 million deficit (a major reason TransformUS was enacted) to a balanced, or almost balanced, budget, as discussed by George and Rafiq:

- R1: I think there’s a lot of cynicism about the university budget because of the surplus or the anticipated deficit.
- R2: The 44.5 million dollar deficit, yeah.
- R1: And there’s just no – then all of a sudden oh, its evaporated. So no one trusts them at all.
- R2: Yeah.
- R: And the books haven’t been made open and nothing is being opened there...

Looking closer at transparency and controlling for discipline using the three-part academic division (STEM, social and health sciences, and fine arts and humanities see Figure 5.7), it appears that discipline has a significant effect on responses to perceptions of transparency at the institutional level ( $\chi^2=.027$ ) with STEM and Humanities and Fine Arts faculty perceiving institutional transparency more negatively than did their Social and Health Science colleagues.

A majority of respondents reported that salary increases and tenure and promotion processes in their units were transparent or fair, respectively, with 68% of respondents agreeing or somewhat agreeing that decisions regarding salary increases in their unit are transparent, and 73% of respondents agreeing or somewhat agreeing that the tenure and promotion process is fair. It is possible that faculty might have more “say” over resource allocation at the unit level than at the institutional level which would lead them to perceive the unit as more transparent.

Figure 5.6 *Resource Allocation in my \_\_\_\_\_ is Transparent (%)*

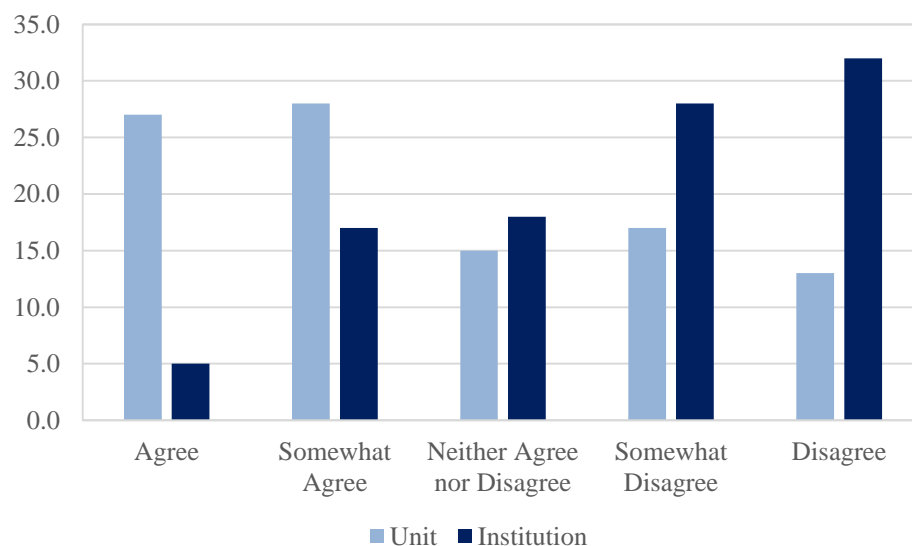
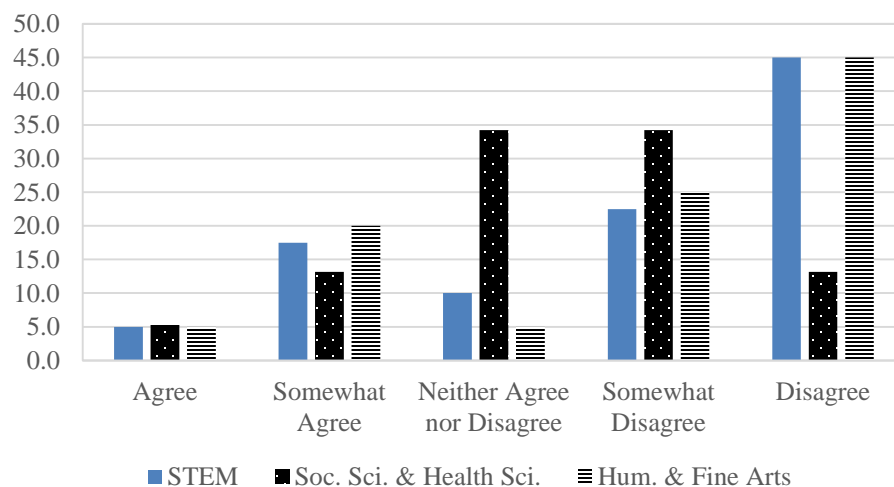


Figure 5.7 *Perceived transparency of resource allocation at institutional level by discipline (%)*





### 5.1.3 Resources

Faculty surveyed were satisfied with their compensation, with 87% of respondents saying they agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement “I am satisfied with my compensation as a whole”. This likely reflects a commitment made by the University Provost several years ago to ensure faculty salaries were competitive. When asked whether they have the work-related resources they need (e.g., space, personnel, funding) to do their job well, 61% agreed or somewhat agreed and just under one third, at 31%, somewhat disagreed or disagreed (see Figure 5.8). I would speculate that the somewhat high number of those saying they do not have the resources they need may be due to the increase in service administrative duties on top of their scholarly duties, but further inquiry is necessary to determine this. By “administrative duties”, I refer to reproduction of journal articles or classroom materials, running multiple choice exams to the University office for scanning of the response sheets, entering final marks into the University database, learning new software to use and report on professional and research funds, and the list goes on.

Rank had an effect on responses to this question (see Figure 5.9), with a majority of full (70%) and associate professors (69%) agreeing or somewhat agreeing that they have the work-related resources to do their job well, while a majority (52%) of assistant professors disagree or somewhat disagree with the statement ( $\chi^2 = .020$ ). This is likely because more senior faculty have more established revenue streams to pay for the resources they need. Seventy-four percent of respondents agreed (28%) or somewhat agreed (46%) that they had access to the professional development resources that they needed.

Figure 5.8 *I have the work related resources I need (%)*

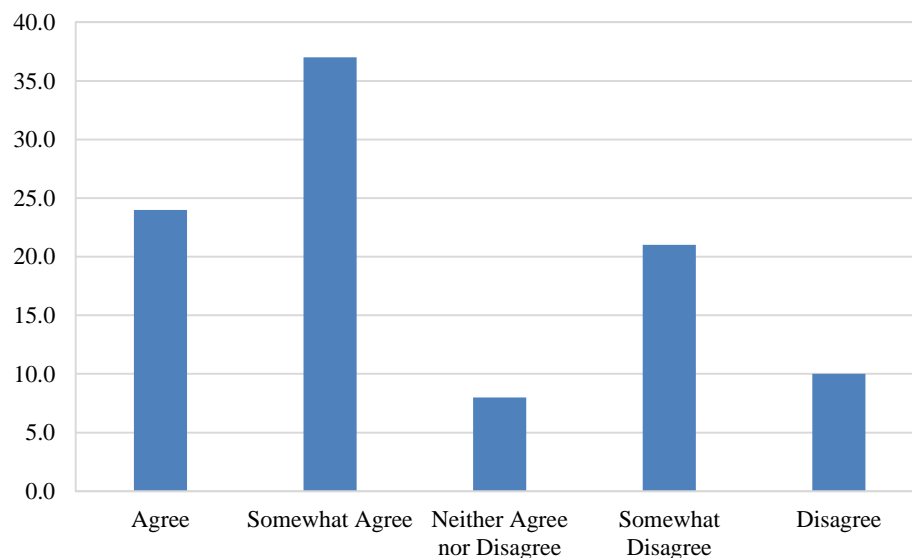
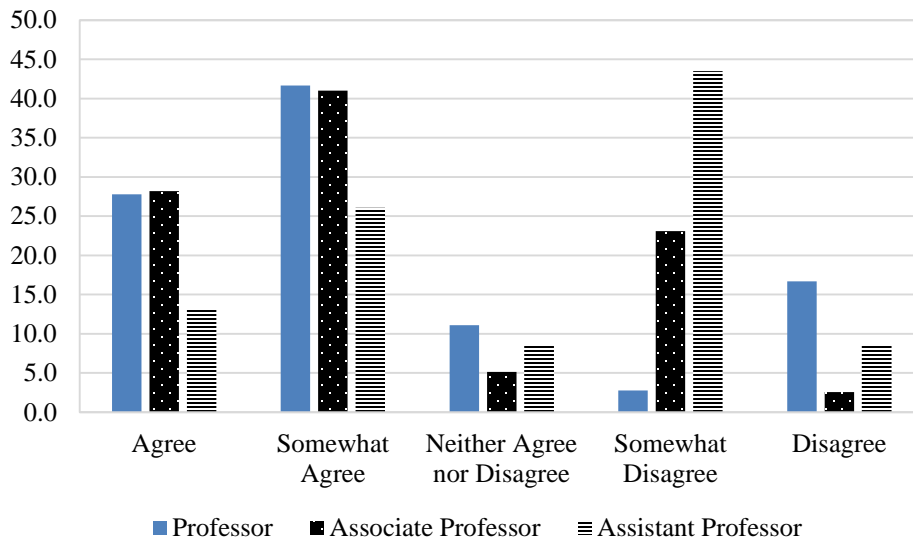


Figure 5.9 *Work related resources by rank (%)*



In terms of physical energy required to undertake their role, the vast majority (78%) of respondents indicated that they had the energy to do their job well. When responding to a statement about whether they had resources outside of the workplace that they can draw on to help them through challenging times at work, a majority (59%) agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement (Figure 5.10). Almost one in five (19%) disagreed or somewhat disagreed. ESL respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement, with a Mann-Whitney mean rank of 76.11, compared to non-ESL respondents, with a 46.33 mean rank,  $U = 243.50$ ,  $z = -3.68$ ,  $p = .000$ . When asked if they had responsibilities outside the workplace that are distracting while they are at work (Figure 5.11), a surprising one in four respondents agreed or somewhat agreed (28%) with the statement. When asked if there are role models in their unit for how to create a satisfying work-life balance, respondents were split, with 42% agreeing or somewhat agreeing, and 40% somewhat disagreeing or disagreeing with the statement (Figure 5.12).

Figure 5.10 *I have resources outside of the workplace that I can draw on to help me through challenging situations and times at work (%)*

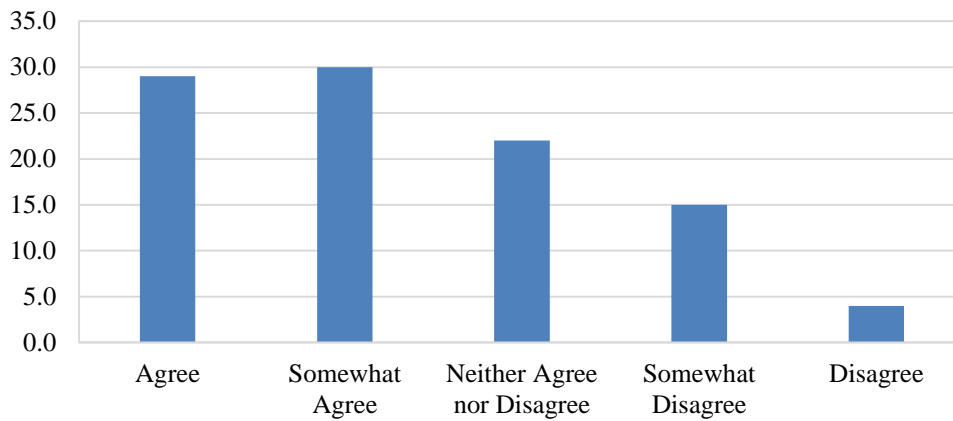


Figure 5.11 *My responsibilities outside of the workplace are distracting for me while I'm at work (%)*

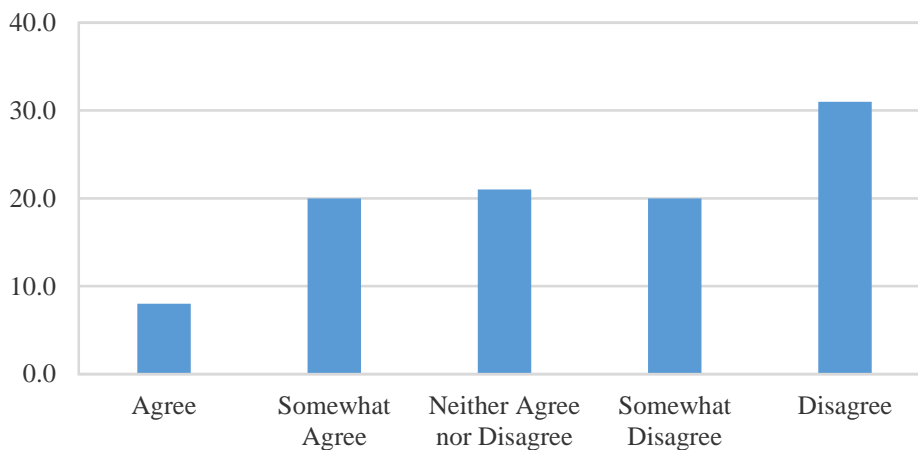
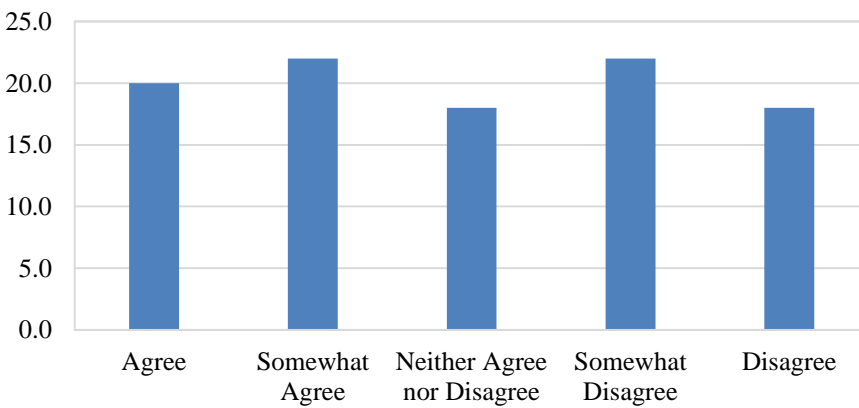


Figure 5.12 *There are role models in my unit for how to create a satisfying work-life balance (%)*



Given increasing expectations around accountability and faculty's related need to document their performance, plus new expectations to take on more and more duties, I asked faculty about their perceptions of time as a resource. They reported being very pressed for time, with only one in four agreeing that they had "time to do everything that is expected of them at work, and to do it well"; 62% somewhat disagreed or disagreed with the statement (Figure 5.13). A lack of time was particularly acute for assistant professors, 69% of whom somewhat disagreed or disagreed that they had what they needed to do everything well (see Figure 5.14). This is consistent with the challenges involved in achieving tenure and developing new classes and a research program or scholarly portfolio.

Figure 5.13 *I have time to do everything that is expected of me at work, and to do it well (%)*

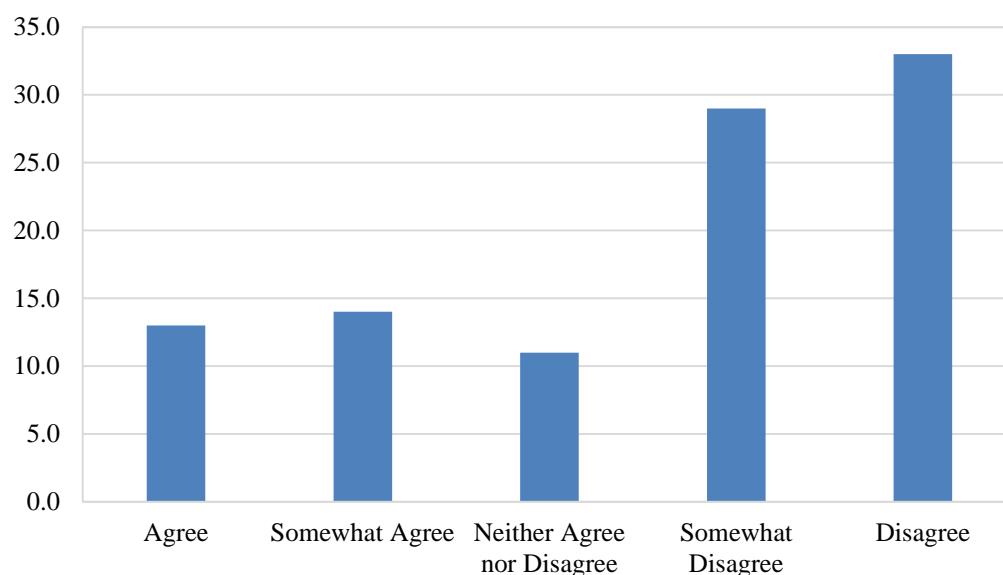
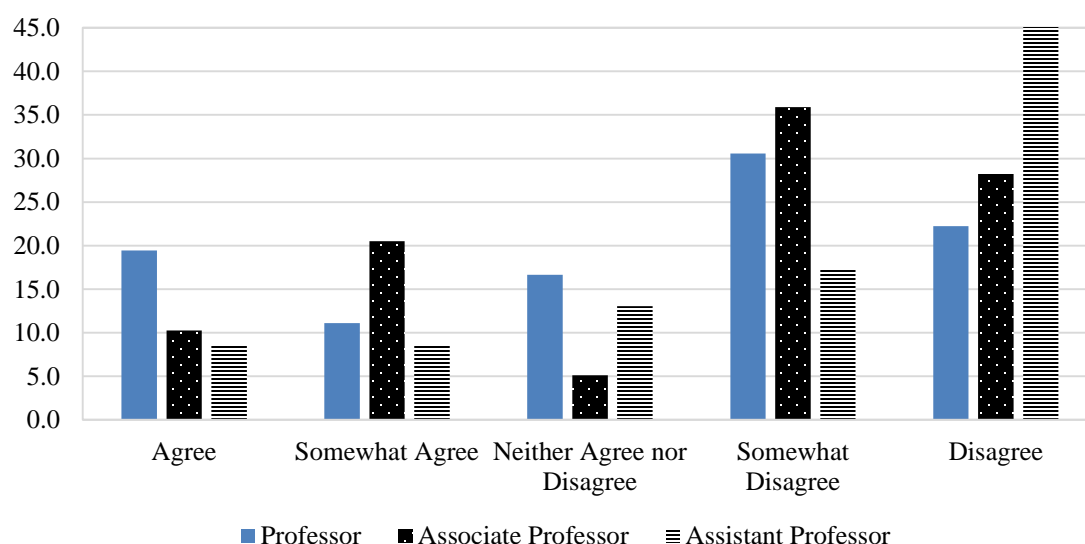


Figure 5.14 *Time to do everything well, by rank (%)*



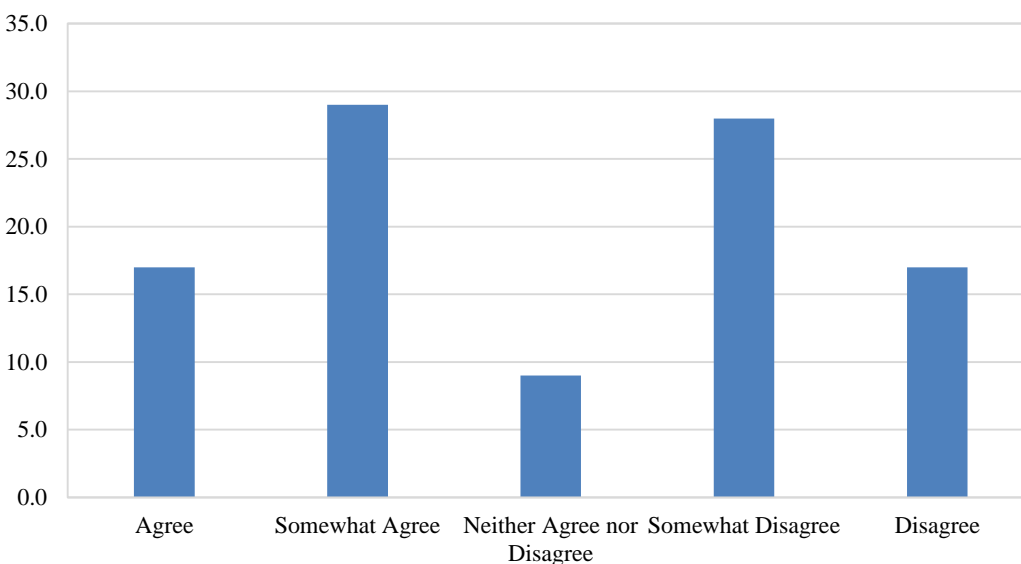
A Mann-Whitney test for differences between visible minorities and non-visible minorities shows a lower mean rank for visible minorities (31.82, compared to 52.81),  $U = 284.00$ ,  $z = -2.34$ ,  $p = .019$ , meaning visible minorities are more likely to agree with the statement; they are more likely to feel they have time to do everything that is expected of them.

The feeling of not having time to do everything well is captured in the following quote from Derek:

Even institutions that are primarily teaching institutions buy into this “publish, publish, publish; the industry standard is one single authored peer reviewed [paper]...and that’s not merit, that’s what we expect. And if you want merit, depends on your rank” and so it goes...That has disillusioned me and I’m kind of tapped out. I just don’t do that. I have little kids...and stuff that I would like to do away from campus. And were I to attempt to fulfill these expectations wherever they came from about publishing, publishing, grantsmanship...were I to do all that, you know, I don’t know – my family life would go to hell, I can tell you that right now. I don’t know that I’d do anything but my job.

When asked if they have “time to focus on the aspects of the job that they love” respondents were split with 46% agreeing or somewhat agreeing with the statement, and an almost equal percentage, 45%, saying they somewhat disagreed or disagreed (Figure 5.15).

Figure 5.15 *I have time to focus on the aspects of my job that I love (%)*



It was important, when inquiring about faculty perceptions of time, to know whether faculty’s perceptions of how they are expected to spend their time aligned with actual institutional expectations. I also inquired about how faculty actually spent their time and, if they had their way, how they would ideally spend their time. The answers to these questions begin to paint a picture of the degree to which faculty members may or may not be aligned with stated institutional expectations around their work. The answers also reflect faculty members’

priorities, and provide an entry point into a discussion about what activities faculty are valuing and why, and the potential impact of governmentality on faculty's work.

Table 5.1 *Comparison between how faculty report actually dividing their time, and how they ideally would divide their time, with variation between actual and ideal, in mean percentage*<sup>7</sup>

Faculty Category	Activity	Actual Time Spent (%)	Ideal Time Spent (%)	Variation (%)
All faculty	Teaching	41.0	35.0	-15
	Research/Scholarly work	31.0	47.0	52
	Service	25.0	15.0	-40
	Other (e.g., professional service)	7.0	10.0	43
STEM	Teaching	34.5	30.4	-12
	Research/Scholarly work	39.1	53.6	37
	Service	24.4	14.7	-40
	Other (e.g., professional service)	5.5	5.4	-1
Social and Health Sciences	Teaching	46.4	36.9	-21
	Research/Scholarly work	27.0	43.2	60
	Service	21.9	13.8	-37
	Other (e.g., professional service)	9.8	11.7	19
Humanities and Fine Arts	Teaching	42.5	40.4	-5
	Research/Scholarly work	22.3	38.5	73
	Service	32.3	17.8	-45
	Other (e.g., professional service)	4.6	11.4	146

To begin, I asked faculty how the institution expects them to divide their time amongst certain activities. Mean time in percentage for each activity are shown in Table 5.1 for all respondents, and by disciplinary category (STEM, Social and Health Sciences, and Humanities and Fine

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<sup>7</sup> Activity percentages had to add up to 100% *within* each survey. Each cell in this table, however, is an average *across all surveys*, so the column totals for different categories of faculty will not add up to 100%.

Arts). Overall, survey respondents' perceived institutional expectations, with a 38/38/28 split of time, were closely aligned with actual institutional expectations – that is, a 40/40/20 split between teaching, research and scholarly/artistic work, and service/other work, respectively. Faculty are clearly aware of the UofS's expectations of them in terms of how they are to divide their time. There were significant differences between disciplines in terms of how they *actually* spend their time, as reflected in the means for each category (Table 5.1) and the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results (Table 5.2). The grand mean for actual time spent on teaching was 41% (Table 5.1). Controlling for discipline, Social and Health Sciences, and Humanities and Fine Arts respondents spend a larger percentage of their time teaching, at 46% and 43% respectively, than do their STEM counterparts at 35%,  $F(2,95) = 5.69, p=.005$ . Effect size of discipline on actual time teaching is moderate to large, with Eta ( $\eta$ ) = .10.

The grand mean for time spent on research and scholarly work was 31%. Controlling for discipline, STEM respondents report spending 39% of their time on research and scholarly work, compared to their Social and Health Science, and Humanities and Fine Arts peers, at 27% and 22% respectively,  $F(2,95) = 8.67, p=.000$ . Results show a large effect size for the impact of discipline on actual time spent on research, with Eta ( $\eta$ ) = .15.

Table 5.2 *One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of **Actual** Time Spent on Teaching, Research/Scholarly Work, Service, and Other activities (e.g., professional service) by Discipline*

Teaching	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta$
	Between Groups	2	2844.69	1422.35	5.69	0.005	0.107
	Within Groups	95	23744.37	249.94			
	Total	97	26589.06				
Research/Scholarly Work	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta$
	Between Groups	2	4747.31	2373.66	8.67	0.000	0.154
	Within Groups	95	26010.53	273.80			
	Total	97	30757.84				
Service	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta$
	Between Groups	2	1428.35	714.17	2.73	0.071	0.054
	Within Groups	95	24885.61	261.95			
	Total	97	26313.96				
Other	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta$
	Between Groups	2	247.73	123.87	2.57	0.089	0.107
	Within Groups	43	2075.92	48.28			
	Total	45	2323.65				

Tables 5.1 and 5.3 show the impact of discipline on how faculty would *ideally* spend their time. ANOVA results show significant differences between disciplines in terms of how much time they would ideally spend on teaching,  $F(2,95) = 4.15$ ,  $p=.019$ ,  $\eta = .08$  and research,  $F(2,95) = 6.507$ ,  $p=.002$ ,  $\eta = .12$ . Faculty members in both Social and Health Sciences and Humanities and Fine Arts would prefer to align themselves with institutional expectations of time on teaching and research/scholarly work (~40% each), but STEM respondents would prefer to spend significantly more time than expected on research, at 54%, and less time on teaching, at 30%.

Looking at differences within disciplinary categories (Table 5.1), if STEM respondents had their way, they would prefer to do much more research (Actual: 39%, Ideal: 54%) and less teaching (Actual: 35%, Ideal: 30) and service (Actual: 24%, Ideal: 15%). Similarly, Social and Health Science respondents would prefer to do less teaching (Actual: 46%, Ideal: 37%) and service work (Actual: 22%, Ideal: 14%) and would shift that time to research activities (Actual: 27%, Ideal: 43%) and “other” (likely professional service) duties (Actual: 10%, Ideal: 12%). Humanities and Fine Arts respondents, at 32%, would spend more time than the other two disciplines on service (compared to STEM’s 24% and Social and Health Sciences’ 22%), but would prefer to shift a large amount of that time to their research and scholarly work (Actual: 22%, Ideal: 39%) and “other” activities (Actual: 5%, Ideal: 11%).

Table 5.3 *One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Ideal Time Spent on Teaching, Research/Scholarly Work, Service, and Other activities by Discipline*

Teaching	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta$
	Between Groups	2	1578.90	789.45	4.15	0.019	0.08
	Within Groups	95	18078.94	190.30			
	Total	97	19657.84				
Research/Scholarly Work	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta$
	Between Groups	2	3751.03	1875.52	6.51	0.002	0.12
	Within Groups	95	27383.38	288.25			
	Total	97	31134.41				
Service	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta$
	Between Groups	2	188.30	94.15	0.59	0.556	0.013
	Within Groups	89	14165.31	159.16			
	Total	91	14353.61				
Other	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta$
	Between Groups	2	388.51	194.25	3.81	0.030	0.148
	Within Groups	44	2244.81	51.02			
	Total	46	2633.32				



In summary, faculty's actual time spent on teaching is fairly well aligned with institutional expectations. But faculty surveyed would prefer to spend around 50% more time on research and scholarly and artistic activities than they currently do, and spend less time on teaching (-15%) and service (-40%). Even STEM faculty, who currently spend a higher percentage of their time on research/scholarly work than their peers from other disciplines, would prefer to spend even more time on research, if they had their druthers. I discuss the phenomenon of wanting to spend more time on research and scholarly work in subsequent chapters.

## 5.2 Perceptions of work

### *5.2.1 Meaningfulness, Change, and Intensification*

As mentioned in Chapter 3, faculty identity is espoused as a “principled personal project” (Archer 2008b), so it was not surprising to find faculty members’ work is very meaningful to them, with 84% agreeing with the statement “The work I do is very important to me”. Moreover, 63% of faculty fully agreed that they “spend time on activities that are important to me, regardless of whether or not they will get me promotion/tenure”. Forty-nine percent of respondents agreed and 42% somewhat agreed that they have freedom to develop projects and undertake activities that are important to them. In other words, faculty report having what I call qualified autonomy to undertake activities that are important to them, and tend to do what they feel is important, regardless of whether or not that activity will get them promoted or count towards tenure.

That said, a majority of respondents (54%) agreed or somewhat agreed that they feel overwhelmed by things going on at work (Figure 5.16). In addition to this, 81% agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement “My work has intensified over the last several years” (Figure 5.17). When faculty were asked in the focus groups and surveys to elaborate on how their work is becoming intensified, the predominant responses were related to the increase in administrative and service duties. These quotes were taken from the anonymous surveys:

Higher level of committee and administrative work, much of it occasioned by changes driven by university administration.

More administrative tasks. Downloading of activities to faculty that used to be done by others. Paper work that satisfies the institution but does not help me or my job.

Administrative related work increased enormously over the last decade of my regular faculty career. As the number of administrative people increased in the Dean's office and at the University level the demand for input from faculty increased in proportion. Often we were asked for the same input but in different format for the convenience of the office requesting it. All the increased requests cut largely into time available for research and scholarly work.

Figure 5.16 *I feel overwhelmed by the things going on at work (%)*

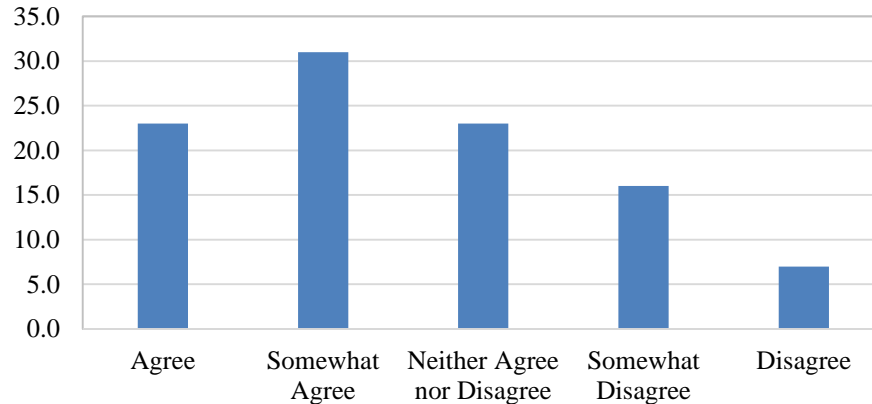
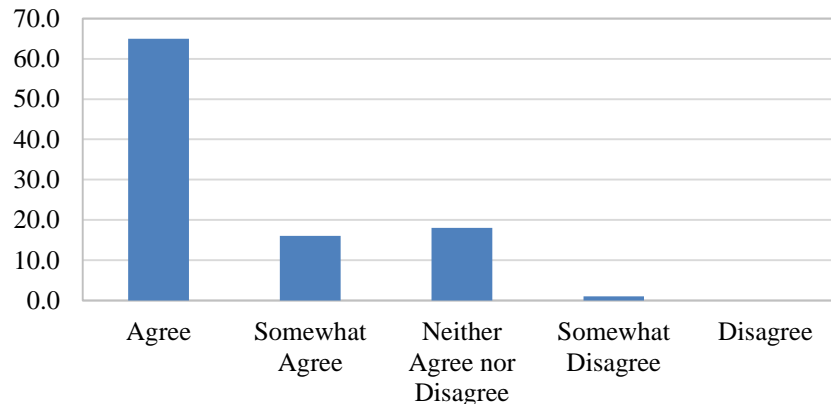


Figure 5.17 *My work has intensified over the last several years (%)*

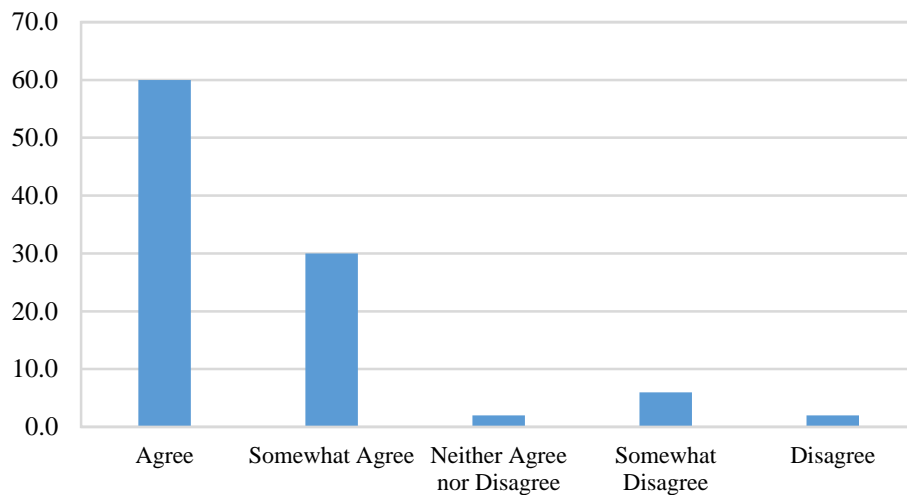


### 5.2.2 Clarity and Congruence

The beginning of this section outlined how faculty's work is very important to them and revealed how they feel their work has intensified over the last several years, mainly due to increased expectations around administrative and service work, in addition to their teaching and scholarly activities. At this point I turn to examine faculty perceptions of their work itself in terms of institutional expectations and how aligned their personal values are with those of the institution. A vast majority (90%) of survey respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that they were clear on what is required to achieve tenure in their unit (Figure 5.18).

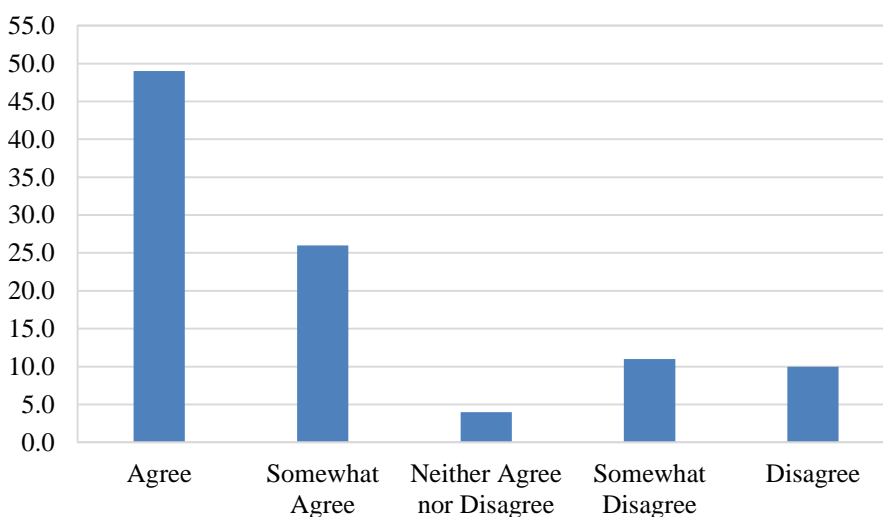
Faculty are aware of the institutional expectations of them in terms of time (as discussed earlier) and the nature of their activities. But are faculty members' personal expectations and values aligned with those of the UofS? As a reminder, in order to measure what I am calling "congruence", that is, alignment of individual and institutional values, I developed exploratory, proxy measures, asking three questions about: 1) whether the scholarly activities they feel are important "count" for tenure/promotion/merit; whether they felt the volume of documentation required to demonstrate performance is reasonable, and; whether they feel the discipline they are currently working in is valued by the university.

Figure 5.18 *It is clear to me what is required to achieve tenure in my unit (%)*



Virtually half (49%) of respondents fully agreed that the scholarly activities they felt were important “counted” (Figure 5.19). One in four offered qualified agreement (26%), and one in five either fully or somewhat disagreed (21% collectively). So while half of participating faculty are in agreement with the UofS about what activities they feel are valuable, an almost equal proportion (47%) feel that a scholarly activity they feel is important is not “counted” by the UofS, making them choose a response other than full agreement.

Figure 5.19 *The scholarly activities I feel are important "count" when it comes to tenure/promotion/merit (%)*



Around half (54%) of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that the volume of documentation required to demonstrate performance was reasonable (Figure 5.20), while just over one in three somewhat disagreed or disagreed (36%). Just under half (49%) of respondents agreed or

somewhat agreed that their discipline was valued by the university, with a sobering 35% disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing with the statement (Figure 5.21).

Figure 5.20 *The volume of documentation required of me to demonstrate performance is reasonable (%)*

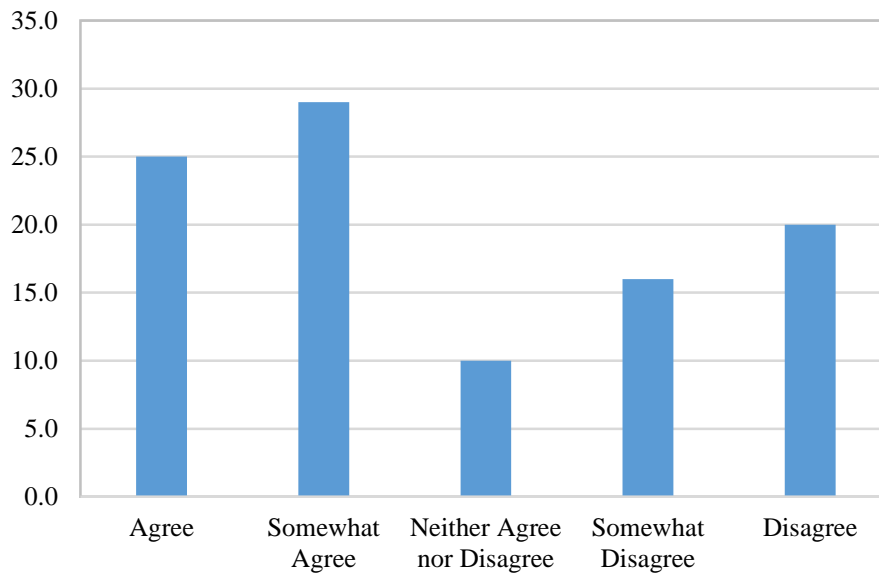
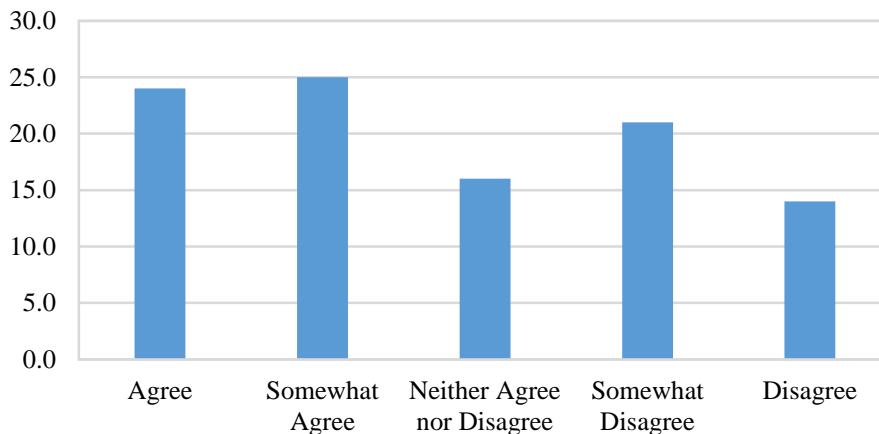


Figure 5.21 *The discipline in which I am currently working is valued by the university (%)*



Control variables that had significant impacts on the responses to the statement that “My discipline is valued by the university” were an administrative role  $\chi^2(4, N = 100) = 9.52, p = .049$ , and discipline  $\chi^2(8, N = 98) = 20.99, p = .007$ . Administrators had a higher Mann-Whitney mean rank than did non-administrators (62.21 to 45.94),  $U = 680.00, z = -2.58, p = .010$ , meaning they were more likely to disagree with the statement. In other words, administrators (or those who have previously been in an administrative role) were more likely than non-

administrators to believe their discipline is not valued by the university. I could speculate that administrators (or those who have held an administrative role) have more exposure to the inner-workings of the university with all of its inconsistency and political machinations, as well as membership in networks of other administrators, and have had to fight for what their unit needs or wants, whether related to resources or otherwise. This may make them more likely to feel embattled than non-administrators. Further study is required to explore this finding.

Controlling for discipline, the Kruskal-Wallis test results for “My discipline is valued by the university” shows significant differences between the three categories, with the highest mean rank held by humanities and fine arts (69.08), then social and health sciences (46.33), and then STEM (42.73),  $\chi^2 (2, N = 98) = 12.807, p = .002$ . After conducting Mann-Whitney tests to compare two categories at a time within the three-category discipline variable, to see where the significant differences lie<sup>8</sup>, STEM and social and health sciences respondents did not reply significantly differently to the statement on whether their discipline was valued. However, Humanities and Fine Arts responses were significantly different from both STEM ( $U = 188.0, z = .3397, p = .001$ ) and Social and Health Sciences ( $U = 200.5, z = -3.024, p = .002$ ). In other words, respondents in STEM and social and health sciences disciplines were more likely to agree that their discipline is valued by the university, than were humanities or fine arts respondents. This could be reflective of the shift taking place at a global and national and institutional level to value knowledge that can have immediate application, such as that often produced by STEM and Social and Health Sciences.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, I developed a derived variable for congruence by summing and reverse-coding responses from the three aforementioned congruence questions, whereby a high score on the variable means the respondent has a high level of congruence between individual and institutional values. Control variables that had a significant impact on the derived congruence variable were rank and discipline. Assistant professors had a mean rank of 43.65, associate professors 48.69, and full professors 58.94,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 100) = 7.99, p = .046$ , meaning congruence between institutional and individual values appeared to increase with rank. After running a Kruskal-Wallis test, the Humanities category had the lowest mean rank at 36.45, indicating the lowest congruence between institutional and individual values; Social and Health Sciences fell into the middle with a mean rank of 51.47, and STEM disciplines held the highest mean rank at 54.15,  $\chi^2 (2, N = 98) = 5.52, p = .063$ . So what does this mean? Faculty respondents from the humanities and fine arts show the lowest congruence with the institution when measured in terms of valuing their preferred scholarly activities, valuing their discipline, and demonstrating accountability through documentation. Overall, they feel least valued by the university. The specific nature of the relationship (e.g., whether they are causal or spurious) between congruence and the two variables discipline and rank was not determined in this study.

### 5.3 Engagement and the Performative Ethos

Now that we have a sense of what faculty’s work means to them and how their values do or do not align with those of the institution, I turn to examine faculty engagement. A full 90% of

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<sup>8</sup> The Kruskal-Wallis test tells us whether or not a significant difference exists between medians of categories within a variable being analyzed. The Mann-Whitney tell us between which categories the differences lie.

respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that they are really engaged in their work. But what does “engaged” mean to faculty? To answer this question, survey respondents were asked to “[t]hink about a colleague or another faculty member you know at the University who is really engaged in their work. In your opinion, what qualities do they have, and what do they do, that make them ‘engaged’?” Themes from survey responses are listed in Table 5.4, along with the number of coded references.

Physical and emotional dimensions of engagement were the prevailing responses (37 references, out of 195), followed closely by productivity, particularly in research (29 references), an ability to prioritize, focus, manage time and be disciplined (23 references), and being student- and learning-focused (22 references). Aspects of physical and emotional dimensions are evident when respondents say an engaged faculty member is “passionate about their work, excited”, they “enjoy their work. Believe in the importance of their work”, and “they remain optimistic about the value of teaching and research even when society and the institution do little to acknowledge its value”. They also have “energy and time to accomplish tasks”.

Table 5.4 *Qualities used to describe an “engaged colleague”*

<b>Quality of "really engaged" colleagues</b>	<b>% of respondents who mentioned quality</b>
Energy/enthusiasm/optimism	37
Productivity, especially regarding research	29
Ability to prioritize, focus, manage time, disciplined	23
Student- and learning- focused	22
Intellectual curiosity and vision	17
Have time	13
Engage in service/efforts to make a difference	11
Spend personal time	11
Collegial	9
Play "the game"	9
Do not let administrative duties deter them	7
Ability to avoid administrative duties and/or teaching	7

Shared dimensions between May *et al*'s and the UWES-9's factors and survey responses captured quite neatly the emotional and intellectual aspects of engagement, as well as the meaning their roles have for them:

1. energy/enthusiasm/optimism
2. ability to prioritize, focus, manage time, disciplined
3. student- and learning- focused
4. intellectual curiosity and vision
5. engage in service/efforts to make a difference

Responses that were not reflected (or not reflected well) by the May *et al* or UWES-9 models are related to what I will call Strategies/Conditions and Outcomes. Strategies/Conditions refer to the strategies used to create conditions for engagement. Often, but not always, this is accomplished by making time at work to focus on what is important to them, or freeing up non-working time to engage in work activities. As a characteristic of an engaged faculty member, spending personal time on work activities could reflect one of two things, or perhaps both: 1) a personal characteristic of dedication to their job, or; 2) a reflection of the lack of time and a compulsion (as opposed to internally motivated) to do the work when they would typically spend it on personal or family pursuits. The following anonymous survey responses show how engaged faculty members use different strategies to create the conditions for engagement:

Clear focus on research goals, devote time to research and writing, avoid the distraction of coming to the office to focus on scholarly research, have requested and received reduced teaching loads as a consequence of their research productivity.. This colleague receives merit increments...annually based on their research performance

They are totally committed to effective teaching and research success. They don't let the idiocy of administrative and bureaucratic busy-work bother them

Overachiever, unbalanced between work and life

Varies with the person. Some really are engaged and productive. Some claim to want to be engaged but are not. Some claim to be engaged, but have ceased to have major input. Some have a niche discipline which appears to be productive, but to me has relatively little academic content

Very focused on a specific program of research, teaching compliments this

They have significant grant monies to buy the support that was there previously

Strategies outlined include avoiding the office to avoid being disturbed, not getting caught up in busy work, using personal time to do work, creating a "performance" focused largely on how it will be perceived and rewarded, and using grant money to supplement unit support resources.

Finally, "Outcomes" are seen in the high number of mentions of productivity, especially regarding research. Engaged faculty "publish, present papers, create new courses, win teaching awards, show an interest in the work of their colleagues and attend academic events". They are "enthusiastic, academically productive (e.g., publishing and getting research grants), [and] administratively productive (member of many university and college-level committees)". They "teach classes, supervise graduate students, publish in high quality journals, work with industry".

Clearly there is a performative dimension to faculty's definition of engagement, one that requires externally identifiable activities and results.

#### 5.4 Summary and Discussion

The working environment for faculty members appears to moderately supportive, but under strain. For example, while faculty are satisfied with their compensation and most (except assistant professors) have access to the work-related resources they need, faculty were evenly split between those who did and did not indicate that they have a role model in their unit for how to create a satisfying work-life balance. While faculty have mutual respect for one another, only half feel a sense of "kinship" with their colleagues, and one in four report that they do not fully trust their colleagues. This may be a hangover from the TransformUS program review process; it would be interesting to do the survey again (or portions of it) to compare how faculty feel after some time has passed.

Responding to questions about their unit work culture, faculty report relatively high levels of academic autonomy, but very few reported unqualified autonomy. Only half of participating faculty report being satisfied with their department's culture of work-life balance, and only around half believe their department at least somewhat supports "boundary-pushing" work. Of those who felt their department did not support boundary-pushing work, 90% were from either STEM or Social and Health Science disciplines (46% and 42% respectively). Finally, related to work culture, when asked about transparency of resource allocation at department and institution levels, departments fared much better than the institution; only 40% of surveyed faculty felt that resource allocation at the institutional level was transparent.

Faculty report being short on time, with only one in four agreeing they have the time to do everything that is expected of them and to do it well. The lack of time was particularly acute for assistant professors who were developing new classes and research programs. Overall, survey respondents' perceived institutional expectations, with a 38/38/28 split of time<sup>9</sup>, were closely aligned with actual institutional expectations – that is, a 40/40/20 split between teaching, research and scholarly/artistic work, and service/other work, respectively. Faculty are clearly aware of the UofS's expectations of them in terms of how they are to divide their time. But faculty surveyed would prefer to spend around 50% more time on research and scholarly and artistic activities than they currently do (from 31% to 47%), and spend less time on teaching (-15%) and services (-40%). I discuss this further in subsequent chapters when I share how faculty perceive certain activities are valued and how they subsequently spend their time. When controlling for discipline, faculty in all disciplines are spending the time that is expected of them on teaching and service, but not on research and scholarly work, with the exception of STEM faculty. Even STEM faculty, who currently spend close to 40% of their time on research (in line with institutional expectation) would spend more time on research/scholarly work if they could.

Having covered faculty's perceptions of their work environment, work culture, and resources, I then discussed findings showing that faculty feel the work they do is important to them, and that the majority of faculty spend time on activities that are important to them regardless of whether

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<sup>9</sup> These sum of these numbers is more than 100. This is because the questions about teaching, research, and service were discrete items on the survey. While the percentages had to total 100% within surveys, the numbers I present here are averages of each discrete question across surveys.



or not they are rewarded. The majority also feel that their work has intensified, largely due to increased administrative and service responsibilities, and, as a corollary to that, a paucity of time. It is unsurprising then that over half of faculty respondents feel overwhelmed by things going on at work. I then explored whether the sense of being overwhelmed may be due, in part, to a lack of congruence between institutional and individual faculty values and expectations.

A vast majority (90%) of survey respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that they were clear on what is required to achieve tenure in their unit, so clarity of expectations was not an issue. But while half of participating faculty are in agreement with the UofS about what activities they feel are valuable, an almost equal proportion (47%) feel that a scholarly activity they feel is important is not “counted” by the UofS, making them choose a response other than full agreement.

Around half (54%) of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that the volume of documentation required to demonstrate performance was reasonable (Figure 18), while just over one in three somewhat disagreed or disagreed (36%). Just under half (49%) of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that their discipline was valued by the university, with a sobering 35% disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing with the statement. Faculty respondents from the Humanities and Fine Arts show the lowest congruence with the institution when measured in terms of valuing their preferred scholarly activities, valuing their discipline, and demonstrating accountability through documentation. Given these findings, I do not think it is unreasonable to draw the tentative conclusion that there is considerable dissonance between some individual faculty’s values and institutional values, and these are likely contributing to some of the malaise being experienced by the profession, at least at the UofS.

Ninety percent of faculty consider themselves to be engaged in their work. When faculty were asked to elaborate on what “being engaged” looked like as a faculty member, prevailing descriptions included physical and emotional dimensions and productivity (often, but not always, relative to research), followed by an ability to stay focused on what is important, and exhibiting a focus on students and learning. Throughout descriptions of engaged colleagues were references to what I call Strategies/Conditions and Outcomes. Strategies/Conditions refer to the strategies used to create conditions for engagement (e.g., able to avoid sitting on committees), and Outcomes refer to the prevalence of productivity as a descriptor of engaged faculty.

From a Foucauldian perspective, responses to my inquiry about what engagement looks like lead me to argue that engagement is being defined in large part as displaying a disciplined and efficient self who is able to navigate effectively the workplace and create the conditions in which they can successfully perform. This entrepreneurial form of engagement reflects what Sinclair *et al* (2014) have called “entrepreneurial subjectivity” where faculty, in attributing reasons for their success at research, emphasized what they term “soft skills” such as hard work, persistence, curiosity or passion, accessing a mentor, and networking. “Successful researchers appear to have flexible, responsive, and adaptive dispositions - what we call ‘an entrepreneurial subjectivity’” (p. 1) that allowed them to access and combine these soft skills in ways that positioned them to be successful at research.

The term ethos is defined by Oxford English Dictionary as “the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its beliefs and aspirations”<sup>10</sup>. Given the findings from this chapter, I would like to suggest here that a performative ethos has taken shape in the university community and the faculty community within it, one that makes it increasingly difficult to be successful<sup>11</sup> without buying into the new regime of accountability. We can see this performative ethos in the fact that individual congruence with institutional values increases with rank. We can see it in the fact that STEM faculty show the highest congruence with institutional values – an unsurprising finding given the policy preferences for STEM work that I outlined in earlier chapters.

What is striking about the performative ethos is the emotions it evokes in individual faculty. The performative ethos comes increasingly into focus when faculty members describe in ethical terms the behaviours of “engaged” faculty members who do *not* buy-in to the performative ethos (taken from the anonymous survey):

This colleague is enthusiastic and soldiers on, regardless of the institution's prejudice against the type of work in which he engages.

They are committed to teaching and mentoring undergraduate students, they take on their fair share of the duties and tasks required to run a fully functioning Department, they have a research program and regularly give graduate courses. They do not shirk teaching, mentoring and administrative duties so they can spend the majority of their time on their research. They are "good" citizens of their Department, College and Profession.

The existence of competing value systems and the performative ethos within the workplace can cause challenges and tensions for faculty who are trying to negotiate these value systems and this ethos in a personally meaningful way. I take up this theme in the next chapter.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethos> January 27, 2016 12:44 pm

<sup>11</sup> This is a loaded term, but here I refer to typical markers of academic success such as promotion and tenure.

## 6. Challenges, Tensions, and Ethical Issues in the Corporate University

This chapter outlines challenges and tensions that faculty identified as needing to be negotiated in their work, particularly those related to increasing calls for accountability and technologies of governance. Broadly speaking, these challenges and tensions results from the application of a business model to academic work and the related metrics that are applied to measure outcomes. I discuss the effect this business model can have on the quality of scholarship (teaching, research, service), the strategies individuals, units, and organizations use to optimize outcomes on these metrics, and the ethical dilemmas these strategies raise for faculty. I then link these challenges and tensions to a performative ethos that exists within the university and make the case that faculty are experiencing ethical dilemmas as a result of the performative ethos.

### 6.1 Business Model and Metrics

One of the fundamental tensions identified by faculty was engendered by applying a business model to an academic institution. While corporate and academic values are not always mutually exclusive - both value production and application of new knowledge, for example - the university still has a strong civic mandate including “to help society to become more just and culturally enriched”<sup>12</sup>. This mandate stands in contrast to an increasingly corporate discourse and style of governance where fiscal imperatives are prioritized, and “successes” from a business perspective become unit successes. Faculty are often keenly aware of the these competing mandates, and the tensions that can occur between corporate and professional values, outcomes, and behaviours can lead to faculty feeling, at best, frustrated, and at worst, like outsiders or delinquents in their own unit. Yousef shared this story (the reader is reminded that pseudonyms are used throughout):

[I remember] sitting in a faculty council meeting with very few people at it, because they don't come anymore, and the CFO [Chief Financial Officer]- because now we have a CFO of a college - stood up and said, “And look how wonderful we did, we have this much money left over that we did not spend”. And there's faculty sitting in the chairs thinking, ‘I had to teach extra classes because you wouldn't give me money for a sessional and now you're gloating because we have money left over?’ ...And there's no recourse, there's nothing to be said. The power over the purse is in that hand. And so why would you go to that meeting to have that kind of rubbed in your face? ...It's very – the disconnect is huge between the people who are making the decisions and the effect it's having in terms of our lives. Yeah, it's very – I find it disturbing.

The fiscal imperatives can be seen in the creation of a Chief Financial Officer within an academic unit. They can also be seen in descriptions of an increase in job

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<sup>12</sup> <http://policies.usask.ca/policies/general/the-university-of-saskatchewan-mission-statement.php>

responsibilities as, in part, an attempt to monetize scholarly activities - to “add value” by, for example, developing for-profit conferences or workshops in addition to their regular duties. This pressure is felt keenly by some faculty who comment that “wherever there is a chance for the university to sort of cash in...monetize and diversify, you know, people are being pushed”. A common example of the need to prioritize fiscal needs of the unit is what a participant called “bucks for butts” model where “if there’s a certain number of kids in a class, everyone is a winner, and if not, they don’t run the class, or we’re given a stern talking to or something like that”. Rafiq further articulates the tension between business and academic imperatives in response to a question about whether his view of the profession has changed, given the changes in the last few decades:

Has my view of the profession changed? No. It’s a business. They’re running it as a business and where that comes into conflict is the people who are actually the university. We don’t run it as a business. We don’t view it as a business. We view it as a calling. And as long as you view it as a calling, you’re probably going to be taken as a volunteer for a lot of the stuff that you do. But you also keep on reasserting your vision of the university. You use it.

This individual describes his faculty role with reverence - faculty “are actually” the university, and their role is a vocation, a “calling”, not just a job. This implicitly places faculty in opposition to “they” who are running the university as a business (i.e. administration), who are NOT the university, and against whom faculty must assert their vision of the institution.

Faculty were also keenly aware that the business model being taken on by academic institutions like the UofS was linked to a political agenda, as illustrated by this quote from George referencing a unit requirement to win a Tri-Council grant in order to be promoted:

To tie promotion to a successful grant application means that what you’re doing is tying the professoriate to the standards [that] have been designated from external sources. Not their own research, not their own research agenda, not their own...identification of the needs and interesting aspects of their profession, but to a potentially and overtly political agenda. And that’s, I think, the problem that so many people are having.

The idea that promotion can only take place when a Tri-Council grant has been awarded is a stark example of the value being placed on research that is determined “valuable” by external, and often political, sources. One participant spoke of being a “servant of something bigger outside of us” and of the frustration that they felt “having [the research] questions predetermined by someone from outside the institution”. They are speaking here of how faculty have to ensure their research topics fit into the priority areas of the different research councils at the national level. In their view, this leads to a “real focus on applied research, and research that is connected specifically to industries...research that ‘pays off’”. From a Foucauldian perspective, the Tri-Council grant requirement is being used as a governmental technology to ensure compliance.

Individuals then modify their behaviour (i.e., research topic choices) so they will be successfully “counted” as productive by their unit. This brings me to the issue of metrics, and what is being “counted”.

The predominant tensions experienced by faculty related to institutional and disciplinary metrics were: 1) teaching, mentoring, and professional practice vs. research and publication; 2) upholding professional standards vs. appealing to students, and; 3) basic vs. applied research. But before I go any further, it is important to frame this discussion by highlighting how tools used to measure outcomes in a corporate-style university do not always capture the inherent value of important activities. This is not to say that the university does not value these activities, but rather that not all activities can be easily measured. Given the significant constraints on their time, faculty must sometimes choose between those activities and others where the value can more easily be captured in metrics being used. This is most evident in evaluating teaching outcomes and activities, but also in evaluating research that is used to improve teaching and professional practice. Artem shared this story about what he called academic “bean-counting” and the response to a course he is developing:

I’m just thinking this is a slam dunk. So I just inform a group that I’m at that this is in the works. And [they respond] ‘no, no, no, no!’ ‘Why?’ Because of this micro – ‘Well, we’ve got to count this and we’ve got to count that and count is going to be off and this count is going to be that.’ And nobody was even asking about ‘Does this help the students? Is it better overall in the long term? Why are you doing this?’ I mean, I just put it out there – it’ll be relatively self-evident as to why it would be of benefit, but it was just like all the questions were the wrong questions. I mean I’m not saying that the issues that were brought weren’t worth considering, but they should have been secondary. Instead, they were not only primary, they were the only questions being asked. So now, you know...the focus entirely 100% is on non-educationally important questions. It’s on bean counting.

The tension between research and teaching is not only experienced in choosing between activities, but also in terms of perceptions of one’s role as an academic, as Derek illustrates:

And I remember a very different way of operating in the institution that had more to do with a student-centered approach to research and less to do with a distinction between your teaching duties and your scholarly work. And that model of the teacher-scholar I think is the thing that has been redefined so that a teacher-scholar is not a scholar who [*audio unintelligible*] as a place for dissemination of research and important exchange of ideas, the creativity in the classroom being of paramount importance. A teacher-scholar now is a tri-council funded researcher who happens to have some time for teaching.

As mentioned earlier, the source of much of this tension is the difficulty in measuring teaching and its outcomes. Kamil offers this observation:

And nobody really trusts teaching evaluations...People who don't get good ones certainly don't trust them. And there are – you know, there are problems with it. There aren't any perfect mechanisms for measuring teaching. And doing it and assessing it properly is very time consuming.

Another major tension experienced by faculty was between offering classes or doing research that may not have wide appeal or direct application but that are fundamental to a discipline, and the institutional directive to be efficient and appeal to large numbers of students. Referring to the fact that he had very few students in a highly specialized graduate level class one semester, Derek said:

I was given a talking to about you know, you can't, you can't do this, what about our enrolment? I said 'How many [*area of study*] grad students do you think there are here in the prairies?'...And yet it's crucial for an understanding of the discipline...So what is being – it's the cost of the costing system right? What's being left behind because it's not cost effective?

From a Foucauldian perspective, the quotes above illustrate the extent to which the accountability discourse is embedded in the culture of the university, from quotidian planning and assessment exercises to shaping conceptions of what defines scholarship. It is also clear that individual positions relative to governmental technologies such as teaching evaluations and planning exercises vary widely from unquestioning acceptance to deep antipathy.

#### *6.1.1 Professional standards vs. appealing to students and administration*

Tensions can also arise between the need to appeal to students so as to ensure a good teaching assessment, and the need to teach fundamental or “dry” aspects of a discipline. The notion of keeping students happy has gained considerable traction with the commodification of a university degree in the new knowledge economy. While competent teaching has always required a delicate balance between content and appeal, the tension appears to be quite pronounced for the faculty I spoke to as they seek to accommodate students' interests and rights to quality teaching, with their knowledge that students' assessments can impact the outcomes of their annual review. These demands to be accountable to different parties in completely different ways can sometimes be at odds with one another. Seshni and Artem, respectively, offer their perspectives on the student-as-client:

And another side effect of that business model [in the university] is that it kind of creates a difficult situation because like an engineering student [has] the same sense of entitlement and kind of [a] customer attitude. So wants to get high marks or pass a course. From the other side there is a proficiency, there is this quality that becoming an engineer requires and that basically creates an impasse because if you want to keep the student happy, you have to bend other rules that you are – that you have an obligation to support. So that is one aspect. And the other aspect is the attitude of the student...One student – he was always on his cell phone, even though I have a no cell phone policy, and his argument was that

I'm teaching a fundamental dry course. It's nothing fun, there's nothing, you know, happy about it. But it's fundamental. His reason was that 'Well, this is not interesting' or something like 'entertaining or fun enough and this is a better attraction'. So with that kind of attitude, this is the raw material and you have to somehow inject this fundamental dry thing into their minds.

Students see themselves as customers, not as students. You know, I paid for this, I demand that. To a certain extent I actually agree that they're entitled to some things but I think their sense of entitlement goes well beyond what they're truly deserving of as a person paying for an education. That does not mean that they're paying for easy, good marks, whatever they want and that sort of thing. But the business model is pushing out a lot of rigor and a lot of fairness...

It isn't just students that faculty need to be accountable to. While faculty do feel they have a lot of autonomy (as we saw in Chapter Five), they are also keenly aware of the value of institutional support, both morally and financially. And if a faculty member undertakes research or scholarly work that isn't closely aligned with strategic priorities or research areas, it can be isolating or even detrimental. We see this in the following two quotes in which faculty members share how certain scholarly interests or activities are marginalized within the university. What they or others do just doesn't "count".

My work is very philosophically oriented...That stuff does not get money. That is not the kind of research that this institution wants or places value in, to help students establish a solid philosophical underpinning for the work that they're going to participate in. [It] is not valued here and I've learned this the very hard way.

R: You know, I mean there's a big push right now for undergraduate research experiences and somebody was telling me that folks from Gwenna Moss [Centre for Teaching Effectiveness] came and had, you know, kind of pushed [a faculty member] into doing this project with his students instead of a research paper. Well in his discipline, actual researchers go to libraries and read books and write research papers. (Laughter) So when did that get ruled out about – this is an authentic research experience, you know?

I: Hmm, hmm.

R: Yeah, yeah.

R: You know...because the Gwenna Moss people think that's old fashioned and they're not interested in that.

R: Yeah.

R: And they have money and they can dangle it in front of faculty and say if you do this project for us, which you should do because it's the right thing to do and these are the university imperatives, you know, we'll be able to support you. And it is a bit of tail-wagging eh?

In the first quote above, Rafiq shares his assessment of what isn't counted at the UofS: philosophically oriented work. In the case of the last excerpt from Mark and Yousef's conversation, not only does a certain scholarly activity not count (that is, going to the library, reading, and then writing), it is discouraged, and not by their peers who are steeped in disciplinary techniques, but by staff at the Teaching and Learning Center who have funding to promote certain kinds of learning activities. Drawing on Lyotard, this appears to be performativity at its finest, where the fundamental concern is with the appearance and perception of a certain type of activity as a "legitimate" learning experience, rather than the development of the students' understanding and application of the subject matter. Drawing on Foucault, the same excerpt is emblematic of governmentality, where the faculty member must be brought into compliance with current discourses around legitimate knowledge production by aligning themselves with techniques approved by staff at the Gwenna Moss Centre.

#### *6.1.2 Applied research vs. non-applied*

Another tension, one that is not new to the higher-education literature, was that between applied research and non-applied research or scholarly work. Artem, a senior faculty member, made the astute observation that emphasizing applied research may have some unintended consequences for the university:

...there's maybe the tendency for people to do research that, you know, you follow something that's interesting to you and that's great. But then, you know, you need to be able to, you know, at some point hopefully some of that actually makes an impact on society. I think that's what we want to do. And so there's maybe – maybe the pendulum at one point was kind of too far the one [way], but I think it's swung way too far the other way where we're looking at, you know research with very short term application. And we want to take the risk out of research. Well, as soon as you take the risk out of research, I'm not sure – it's just engineering design at that point, you know what I mean?...So there's a balance in there somewhere where, yeah, society has to see that "Yes, okay the research we're investing in is – the taxpayer dollars are resulting in something we can use". But...it misses out on the things we don't know we don't know yet, or that we don't know we could do...

In this case, Artem is questioning the emphasis on Mode 2 knowledge production. While governments and funding agencies – and, subsequently, the universities, in another example of "tail-wagging" - emphasize the legitimacy of applied research by providing them with the majority of research funding available, in doing so, they may be handicapping themselves in the long-run by limiting opportunity for novel or major scientific breakthroughs that could emerge out of basic research. This notion of "taking the risk out of research" and its implications for individual faculty's research programs and the university is discussed further in Chapter Seven where I argue that a focus on short-term productivity and Mode 2 knowledge serves to diminish incentives to take a on innovative but risky (i.e. could fail, or not produce a publishable result) research questions, and/or a long-term view to developing a strong research program. I now turn



to some of the effects that the performative ethos, with its competing value systems and focus on measurable outputs, has on the university and faculty work.

## 6.2 Strategies, “Games” and Quality

An emphasis on production, particularly in the short-term, can foster behaviors at the institutional, departmental, and individual level that can: 1) compromise quality; 2) lead to “game”-playing; and 3) possibly lead to ethical dilemmas for faculty. Some respondents argued that when short-term production is emphasized, it can be detrimental to teaching and to long-term research programs, with one faculty member saying “the system is systematically playing down quality”. Lee and Artem had the following to say about the impact the current metrics and reward system have on teaching:

I would...suggest that [a] penalty on quality is actually a universal theme. There are no incentives whatsoever anymore to be a good teacher, other than intrinsic ones because teaching is not valued in any tangible way.

I see so many colleagues here and elsewhere deferring to the easiest possible way to do evaluations because it's easy. Not because it's right, not because it's effective, not because it's a good way of evaluating what's going on with the learning. It's because it's easy and there is no, there is no external benefit to investing in teaching or investing in a long term approach to research, and if you do it, you pay a stiff price. Because, you know, you put in that extra time, while then you're sacrificing on your research side. Sometimes, you know, trying to develop new teaching methods...just like with the building of the research, you know the first time out trying something in teaching it may not go perfectly, and you pay a price for that too. So the system has got very micro-managed and has lost touch with the bigger picture I think. I think that cuts across everything we're saying.

Some faculty felt the focus on institutional metrics has, or could have, a detrimental effect on the quality of their work and that of their colleagues, citing (as discussed earlier) the tension between professional standards and institutional metrics. For Joan (first two quotes following) and Lee (third quote) the choice seems to be a Faustian bargain of sorts – promotion, merit and acclaim, or the satisfaction (which may or not may be recognized by the institution) of doing the best work one can.

And so some people are just, I mean a lot of my colleagues, I'm sure some who are sitting here just resign ourselves to just forgetting about those metrics because they don't – we don't respect those metrics. And also we'd be embarrassed to produce the output in front of our other colleagues at other places. People say “Why are you doing this thing?” “Why did you publish in this place?” for example. “Why are you teaching this instead of that which is more important?” So being a good engineer or being a good engineering researcher or teacher...I think that has different demands from the demands that these metrics are placing on us and that is hurting both research and teaching.

And we've had lots of measuring of teaching and research again. I think the number of publications, at least locally I see that that is the biggest metric. You can publish in a very good place, top 10% place. Well, that doesn't matter..., you know, some of them look at this other person who has so many...

And I think along with that, you know, with the pressure to publish... I think there's the potential that the quality of publications is reduced because you've just got to get stuff out. And so there's a penalty to taking your time and making sure you've got something really good versus just getting it out there.

Respondents also highlighted the potentially negative impact that the ongoing accountability regime can have on innovation. Performativity is identified as having a cost. In the first quote from Joan, the cost of performativity is quality, or "good work". In the second quote from Lee, the cost is innovation, "building capacity for the future". Conversely, in the third quote from an anonymous survey participant, the cost of NOT acting in accordance with the dominant discourse of accountability-as-short-term-productivity is also considerable, possibly even precluding an individual from getting tenure. Faculty are therefore living between a rock and a hard place, as the saying goes.

So another thing I notice is that...there are all these metrics being set...not just on our campus, everywhere else too. So there are efforts to evaluate us which are being made more and more objective...There are these metrics by which we are being judged. And you can optimize your output to those metrics...And those people are putting a lot of effort, they're hard working people, but all their effort is going into optimizing their output to those metrics. And I feel that I cannot be doing or trying to do good work plus putting quite as much time into optimizing my output to those metrics.

You know, I think, especially early in the process, there's a penalty for taking a – trying to take a long term view to your research program that may take – you know, it's going to take a few years to get things really rolling. And so instead of building capacity for the future, you've got to have production right now which – there's a cost to that, I think, in the long run.

I love teaching and I feel the effort I will need to put into meeting the guidelines for promotion and tenure will distract from my teaching. I feel it is counter-productive to spend hours and hours and hours putting together a binder promoting myself to present for renewal and tenure when that time could be spent in improving teaching and doing scholarly activities to become a better faculty member.

### *6.2.1 Strategies and Game Playing*

Respondents highlighted the many ways in which the performative ethos bred creative responses at the faculty, department, and even university level. One faculty member reports how a colleague has strategically chosen to do research in a peripheral and low-impact area of the discipline because the methodologies allow for quick turn-around and a high number of publications. "Some people actually are choosing research areas where

they see that ‘Here is something which I can publish’ – there’s a culture of a lot of publishing, right”. The participant goes on to describe how the person working in that area is getting significant departmental rewards in terms of merit pay. Faculty “have been pushed into areas such as that and that is not adding to our university’s or department’s reputation because everybody else knows what is happening, but internally we’re just blind to it”.

Individual faculty are not the only ones who require strategies to maximize their productivity and/or efficiency; departments can do this too. Derek, from Arts and Science, describes how a department is required to provide a course release to a faculty member who meets the release criteria. But when they provide the course release, they simply assign the individual one larger class in lieu of two smaller ones, to make sure the individual teaches the same number of students:

R1: I teach a 3:2 load but I have the opportunity to earn a course release if I’m productive...But if I earn a course release I still have to teach the same number of students whether or not I’m teaching 3:2 or 2:2.

R2: It’s just you save a prep.

R1: Yeah, but the numbers have to be the same right.

The university itself is not immune to the performative ethos either. Faculty describe the new reality the university faces as one coloured by the inescapable ranking system. While some ranking mechanisms matter more than others, the impact they have on institutions and individual faculty who are seeking to recruit top graduate students and international students is undeniable, as Mark and Yousef discuss here:

R1: I mean, Maclean’s rankings don’t matter much but the actual rankings of universities, international universities, whatever you think of them, they do matter in that, I don’t think the word on this has got out very well, but our rankings fell last year internationally, partly because China and India keep building universities and there’s more in the pool so our rank fell, but also because of the bullshit that happened.

R2: Yeah.

R1: But when we fell, it meant that international, some international – you know governments and other international funding agencies, we fell below the line of universities that they were willing to fund students at. That has started to impact our graduate recruitment.

R2: Yeah, hmm.

R1: You know and so those – you know, we’re in this real environment where some of those metrics really do matter and we do have to – you know we can all say that education should be free but, you know, we’re not going to be 100% funded by government ever again so we’ve got to try and – we can’t exist forever without balancing our books.

In response to this reality, faculty also describe different tactics that the university uses to meet its goals, some subtle, some overt. Before I describe a few examples of these tactics, I need to share a brief story. I once saw a comedian describe how important the ability to listen was in his marriage. But even more important than listening, he said, was the appearance of listening. Because even if he was listening, if his wife did not think he was listening, he was in serious trouble. This amusing observation about the institution of marriage has proven to be a powerful lens when examining other institutions and how people act within them. Faculty in the focus groups shared what they felt were two such examples of the appearance of listening. The first example is the creation of Academic Programming Appointment (APA) positions (with teaching as the emphasis) across the UofS from Dentistry, to Arts and Science, to Engineering. The second is the creation of the Gwenna Moss Center for Teaching Effectiveness. Faculty from social science backgrounds had the following to say about these two examples:

APA positions are a really important signal that the culture is changing somewhat, but we all know you can be a completely negligent teacher and a research star and it won't really hurt our career, you know, within certain bounds. I mean you can't be an utter disaster and you can't break laws and stuff but if you're just a lousy minimalist teacher but a research star, you know, you're on the fast track to being a full professor. You could be God's gift to teaching, and if your research profile isn't there, you will never get above the ceiling. You know, in increments, small increments they start to sort of address that. They declare a few more teaching awards and things. But the reward system, no matter what people say about this – this is one of the things when you're interested in teaching and learning and you try to change the culture, in the back of their minds faculty all know that at the end of the day actually, you know, it's the publications that count for career advancement.

But around the time that we ramped up on research as did most other places in Canada, like most other places in Canada the senior administration created a...Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness... But I had the distinct sense that...it was almost like a kind of blood money that, you know, out of a certain sense of guilt that they were putting all their emphasis on research, they put kind of a flashy amount of money into the central teaching and, you know, student support units that were actually detached from people who actually teach...And so the money did not go to the [Colleges], it went to a central unit which had to, you know, justify its existence and compete for funds.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the development of the center (and others like it at similar institutions) ensures the production and distribution of knowledge about teaching and learning that can be used to bring faculty into compliance with the university's mandate on teaching and learning excellence. For the university to succeed in achieving excellence in teaching, the Center allows a discourse of excellence in teaching and learning to be fostered and disseminated through the university, and offers tools and mechanisms to ensure teaching is examined and improved. To be clear, this discussion does not mean to

imply that the work done in and via the Centre isn't having a positive impact on teaching and learning at the university. My point here is to follow through with my Foucauldian lens, outlining the forces at work (as discussed in Chapter Two) that act together to inform the creation and maintenance of the Gwenna Moss Centre, and the ways in which these forces work through the Centre to ensure compliance with the dominant discourses around accountability and knowledge production.

Sometimes, the games institutions play are overt. In the following story, Yousef shared a story about an institution's tactic to improve ranking that seems intended to make a mockery of a controversial set of Canadian metrics:

One of the metrics that [Maclean's magazine was] measuring was the engagement of alumni and they – one thing they measured was how many people actually donated back to the university. And so one thing that this university did in order to raise those numbers is just tried to get \$10 from as many people as possible. If you get \$10 from a whole bunch of people that number went way sky high. I don't think this is unethical. It's just understanding the metrics and playing to them. It's kind of a waste of time to get \$10 from a bunch of people. But it changed things....What I feel is like, "Okay, I understand the basic – I know what's expected of me, let me get there the quickest way and then move on". And so I don't know if there's ethical problems in there, it's just a matter of resignation to "Okay, here's these hoops, let's fill the hoops and then move on to what really matters.

The above quotations raise the question of ethics. Is there anything wrong with institutions, departments, and individuals "playing to the metrics"? Is game-playing unethical? Is the performative regime unethical? I begin to address these questions below, before turning to a discussion of how faculty are responding to the challenges, tensions, and dilemmas raised in this chapter.

### 6.3 Ethical Issues

What is ethics? The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University defines ethics in the following way:

First, ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues...Secondly, ethics refers to the study and development of one's ethical standards...[F]eelings, laws, and social norms can deviate from what is ethical. So it is necessary to constantly examine one's standards to ensure that they are reasonable and well founded. Ethics also means, then, the continuous effort of studying our own moral beliefs and our moral conduct, and striving to ensure that we, and the institutions we help to shape, live up to standards that are reasonable and solidly-based".<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/>

A corollary to this, “unethical” according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary is defined by actions “not guided by or showing a concern for what is right”<sup>14</sup>. Several quotes I shared earlier reflect a perception that the university is not valuing or rewarding everything that matters. It is clear that many faculty feel a strong ethical obligation to fulfill all aspects of their role, regardless of whether they are being rewarded for them or not. This is not unexpected. As a reminder, Archer (2008a & 2008b) describes faculty identity, based on findings from her studies of faculty identity, as “a ‘principled’ personal project (Clegg, 2007, p. 17), underpinned by core values of intellectual endeavor, criticality, ethics and professionalism” (p. 397). Archer (2008b: p. 397) observes further that, “Professionalism was evoked as the embodying of a principled, ethical and responsible approach to work and work relationships”. This sense of professionalism and ethical obligation, and the difficulty they have fulfilling these obligations while meeting institutional expectations, is shared by Derek, Helene, and an anonymous survey respondent, respectively:

I’ve kind of given up a little bit on the whole, you know, “I’ll go for promotion when I’m good and ready”. Like it’s – there’s a cost to that...But yeah, the metrics are not going to pick up the time I spend one-on-one with students on a Saturday when they’re working on something that’s extra-curricular. Talking with them about what they’re going to do with their lives or just how they’re doing. Like, those things that I think, you know, if you get past the stuff we’re trying to stuff into their heads, it’s – there’s an element of – we’re also here to try to help them develop as people and as future professionals. Yeah, the metrics – I don’t know how the metrics can possibly capture those elements of what higher education is about, the time you spend acting as a mentor to people...

- R1: For me as a person I’m in academia because I enjoy teaching. I just love it. That’s my life. I like coming to the students, going to class, and discussing with them, and that’s one thing you can’t take that away from me. But in order to be able to measure up, to adopt some of those metrics is like this has, this has killed my social life completely. You only have time for nothing else. I went to bed last night after 2:00 o’clock and here I am this morning. Sometimes I’m working until 3:00 o’clock...I don’t believe it’s healthy but I think...
- R2: It’s not!
- R3: No, it’s not, I’ll tell you that right now!
- R1: But take the teaching, for me it’s like, that’s killed me completely...Because at the end of the day we have to ask ourselves are we doing the right thing? Is our conscience telling us we are doing the right thing? If I see this student in the future will I be certain I’ve done a good job? Or would the student think of me in the future when they go back and discover that I’ve given them garbage in class...So to us we’re going to extreme, we’re driving ourselves to some extreme, and maybe we’re able to live long with that, I don’t know.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/unethical>

I have not had more than an extended weekend's vacation (3 - 5 days) in the entire time I have worked at the U of S, rarely more than once a year, and that is not because I'm a masochist... I often work 6 days a week, and still struggle to manage my workload. Universalized rubrics applied to unit performance do not reflect institutional barriers to the flourishing of units and there is considerable resistance to practices of inclusion that take seriously the work involved in bringing students or faculty from systems that vary from the most familiar into a critically informed working relationship with our institutional systems.  
(Anonymous survey entry)

Faculty spoke about the ethical dilemmas they faced as a result of the performative ethos. Some dilemmas are institutional, and some are individual. Artem highlights the ethical dilemmas that universities face as a result of intense competition and the use of ranking systems, as well as the “race to the bottom” effect that efforts to meet these challenges have bred:

So the whole idea of marketing, I think that's definitely something that's changed over the last few decades. You know the internet...there's so much stuff out there, how do you break through and reach your potential students and make a positive impression?...I think institutions cut corners with the truth and play games. So what we've been talking about here today in terms of as individuals, how we play the game, how we play the system, I think that's equally true for a university or a college. How do you play the system? How do you get your students? How do you, you know, making those rankings work for you or whatever and break through the haze of noise on the Internet to reach students both locally and nationally and internationally? I think there's something there as well. And the whole proliferation of journals and online journals – like basically that system even beyond just the university...society has moved over the last couple of decades towards rewarding quantity over quality, you know? Loudness and pizzazz over quiet quality, as it were. That has percolated down to us in the professoriate I would say.

And so we arrive at the professoriate and the impact the performative ethos has had on them, via the changing higher-education culture and the institutional reward system. Somewhat superficially, choices faculty make in response to the performative ethos can impact their bottom-line financially (if they potentially lose out on merit or promotion), and can consume precious time to strategize and manage expectations instead of spending time elsewhere. As Artem puts it:

It's a very expensive, time consuming game and you play the game or you don't play the game. If you play the game, it's I think very damaging to the system (if you play it well) because it works against teaching or (*unintelligible*) and you put out lots of papers because you're using your grad students like slaves and you're publishing in crappy journals but nobody cares and you can get away with it.

More essentially, Artem describes how one's academic identity and profession, ethical and professional standards can fall casualty to the performative ethos:

I think there's been an ethical degradation let's say in the whole system over the last many years, partly as a result of chasing these metrics and having these tools that we're supposed to – that we're up against. So (*name*) mentioned the idea of the business model versus professionalism as an ethical dilemma that arises... Totally agree, happens all the time. But the sad thing is that I think professionalism is sacrificed as often as not. Like it's – I'm not seeing a lot of upholding of high ethical standards... I [am] appalled at the ethical standards let's say of some faculty members, usually in the pursuit of – “The important thing here is I get my research done”, not that students are respected or grad students are respected or test subjects are respected. Like just appalling ethical decision-making. But actually I think the system now encourages bad ethics.

The system encouraging bad ethics is one thing. Feeling compelled to, or actively choosing to, lower one's ethical or professional standards is entirely another, and is much more worrisome for faculty, the university, and scholarship itself. Artem goes on to describe how it feels to be in such a position where one has to choose:

[So I said] I'm not even going to play the game, at least for a few years and see how it goes... [Some faculty are] just playing the system well and that demotivates the people who are here, who are working hard, doing the things that have to be done, doing the hard things that have to be done, the sort of, putting in that personal sacrifice. But there's certainly no external rewards for that, other than perhaps bonding with the students better which is very important I think to everybody in this room. But at some point like [*name*], you started there – “Well, you know, should I do that, or should I...”? The dark side is luring... You're rewarded if you are not ethical and people get away with it just as [*name*] is illustrating. People get away with bad ethics. It sets a standard and it's a slippery slope and everybody starts sliding down it.

Once professional and ethical standards start slipping, it seems one's scholarly identity can begin to waver as well, as this faculty member describes. Perhaps trying to be a “star teacher” and to “solve harder problems in research” just isn't worth it. Joan describes this struggle:

So the question is either you can just ignore all of it and do what you want to do. And you say, “Well these are the things that are important to me”. And there are moments when you think “Okay, why don't I do this thing which will get me a promotion here? So what?” But the only thing is – so you might lose some respect of your colleagues elsewhere, possibly, but I don't think – maybe people don't really care that much, how does that really matter? So there is money versus – so promotion has a little bit to do with money, how much money you're going to make - and so again you know you keep doing things that you like to do and the things that we, many of us like to do they're not easy things to do. Being a, trying to be a star teacher, it's a hard thing to do. Trying to be, you know, to do, to solve



harder problems in research, it's a hard thing to do. And if somebody tells me "Don't do the hard things", there is something in me that tells me hey, maybe I should listen to this person, right. So you're fighting that because you have this, I don't know, some kind of complex from your training or something that, oh no, I should be about better things. But at some point if you're pushed enough times, then you might think, well maybe I should just listen to them. Maybe I should – because it's the same pay cheque. Why should I just, why should I try to do the harder things for this?

It appears a number of faculty are experiencing ethical dilemmas related their professional and personal standards, in large part because the performative ethos and accompanying institutional reward system are misaligned with their professional and personal values. How faculty are responding to these dilemmas is discussed in the next chapter.

#### 6.4 Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has provided an overview of the major challenges and tensions in participating faculty's work. These include the application of a business model to academic work and the corporate-styled metrics that are applied to measure outcomes, particularly fiscal outcomes and metrics related to external audiences. The focus on research and publication, applied research, and research fitting into UofS and TriCouncil priority areas act as governmental technologies, shaping individual behaviour to align with the dominant discourse around what types of knowledge and knowledge production are valuable. These governmental technologies lead to tensions for faculty who, given time constraints, must sometimes choose between activities informed by different, and sometimes competing, logics. For instance, faculty are required to uphold professional standards related to their field, but also need to manage student expectations around course experiences and outcomes because students' opinions will impact their teaching evaluations and student retention.

The choices faculty make have implications for the quality of their scholarship and research and their own well-being. For instance, a faculty member can choose a low-impact, but high-publication-rate area of research to maximize publications. Or a faculty member could choose a high-impact area of research that takes longer to get results for publication, and would have to devise strategies to increase the time available for research and publication to keep their rates up. Managing these competing logics and demands can lead to ethical dilemmas for faculty, largely due to a misalignment of professional and personal values with institutional values. I take this up in Chapter Seven.

## 7. Faculty Responses to Tensions

I demonstrated how an ethos of performativity has evolved within the university that colours every aspect of faculty work-life. Key dimensions of this performative ethos in terms of faculty's work are: an emphasis on certain kinds of knowledge and knowledge production; a requirement to be everything to everyone (even if demands can be contradictory, such as student satisfaction and professional standards), and; a focus on performance that pervades everything (e.g., developing classes and assessments, publishing at a certain rate (even if methods have a long turn-around time), fitting research area into institutional or funding agency priority areas, choosing topics or activities based primarily on how it will be perceived upon review, etc.). And the goodness of a performance, of course, is subject to its alignment with the dominant discourses around accountability and what is being valued. That is, does it address some sort of "real world" problem and advance its solution, has it been recognized by peers and experts outside the institution via publication or external grant, and can it be counted or presented unequivocally on paper so as to merit recognition at the time of review? This performative ethos breeds tensions that faculty must respond to, if not resolve.

### 7.1 Feelings About Their Work

In Chapter Five I pointed out that just over half (54%) of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that they feel overwhelmed by things going on at work, while a vast majority (81%) of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that their work had intensified over the last several years. With not enough time to do everything that is expected of them, and increases in expectations related to administrative duties, service, and research, faculty are constantly having to make decisions about how best to spend their time. This is frustrating for many faculty, one of whom described it as being "squirrels on a wheel", and is a reflection of a misalignment, for many faculty members, between how they are expected, and wish, to spend their time, as discussed in Chapter Five. The intensification and feeling of being overwhelmed can also be interpreted, in part, as a response to a misalignment of values, as evident in the respondent who states, "I can't think of anyone who is willing to invest their energy with enthusiasm. Some colleagues are spending all their energy, but they appear to have lost a sense that what they are doing is in service of a noble or achievable goal". This misalignment was echoed Chapter Six, in which faculty experienced tensions around having to be accountable to different groups (e.g., students, review committees) that are informed by vastly different values.

When asked how participants felt about the tensions that they deal with everyday, it quickly became clear that how faculty feel, and how they respond, depends in part on rank. Artem, who has tenure, shared this:

I think one of the major elements to that is where we are in our careers. If you're pre-tenure, I think the answers are going to be much different than if you're post-tenure... But I am post-tenure and I know how I feel now and certainly being post-tenure you have a sense of freedom that you did not have before... However, the issues don't totally go away. I mean I get the idea and actually live the idea of, you know, I've abandoned the metrics, I don't care. Like I got past tenure, at this

point I don't care who is measuring or what's going on. Whatever, I'm going to do what I think is right and best and that is a certain freedom which is quite nice. However, it's not, it's not quite the blank cheque that everybody maybe thinks it is. I mean if you want to be a good teacher, there are still obstacles to being a good teacher. If you want to be a good researcher there's still obstacles to that...[And] if you have strong personal goals to be a good teacher, researcher, administrator or whatever, you still face the system and you can still, I think, get frustrated, especially if you're driven by intrinsic motivators.

The intensification faculty feel can also be interpreted as resulting from their difficulty adapting to the significant changes that occurred leading up to and during the TransformUS process. As Kamil stated, "change isn't always bad, but some faculty have a hard time with change", observing later that, "In some cases changes [like the Commons model<sup>15</sup>] were not bad. There's nothing wrong with a Commons model, right, like a typing pool...[The] problem happens in the adjustment period and then in the internalization of the new normal which then becomes normal and naturalized". Strathern (2000, p. 3-4) frames this need for "adjustment" in terms of a Foucauldian governmental technique:

Where audit is applied to public institutions—medical, legal, educational—the state's overt concern may be less to impose day-to-day direction than to ensure that internal controls, in the form of monitoring techniques, are in place. That may require the setting up of mechanisms where none existed before, but the accompanying rhetoric is likely to be that of helping (monitoring) people help (monitor) themselves, including helping people get used to this new "culture".

One can easily read Foucault into this interpretation of feelings of intensification, where faculty require time to "internalize" the new order, with its attendant logic of efficiency and cost-savings.

But for some faculty, their feelings reflect deeper issues than simply adjusting to the new normal. Some are struggling with conflicted feelings about their profession as a whole. When asked how they are feeling now about their profession, in comparison to how they did when they first started, one participant stated, "With regard to the profession such as it is...I don't know that I view the profession any differently because I'm clinging on maybe to a false hope. Clinging to a false hope or an ideal or a misconception of what I thought being a professor was going to be like". Disillusionment was a theme that ran through the focus groups, usually referring to the institutional culture and/or what were perceived as unreasonable expectations placed on individual faculty. Derek and Rafiq, respectively, have the following to say about these expectations.

Even institutions that are primarily teaching institutions buy into this – publish, publish, publish, the industry standard is one single-authored peer reviewed article over a year period...and that's not merit, that's what we expect. And if you want

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<sup>15</sup> This refers to a model where instead of providing each unit with the same support personnel, support personnel are pooled and drawn on as needed by units, in an effort to be more cost-effective.

merit, depends on your rank, and so it goes. I mean, again, who has time? That has disillusioned me and I'm kind of tapped out.

- I: ...When you think about what you hoped for and what academics would be, and then when you arrived –
- R: Oh –
- I: And you've lived it now for some time...
- R: Disillusioned.
- I: I was going to ask, how would you describe –
- R: Disillusioned...I thought what have I done? Why did I make this decision? I'm struggling with the decision that I made to...come to a place where I thought it's an institution, it's an university, right, where you bring people in to learn how to think...So I was totally disillusioned, I questioned my decision to enter the academy.

This state of dissatisfaction or disillusionment is accompanied, in some cases, by frustration, anxiety, uncertainty, and anger. The following quotes provide an example of each of these responses to tensions, but overall can be viewed as a rejection of the current regime of accountability that, with its intent focus on meeting the expectations of external stakeholders, risks alienating its core constituents, the faculty. Yousef shares his frustration at the lack of “payback” for good teaching:

I pride myself on my teaching and my favorite part of my job is my teaching. So I don't teach any less well, I don't think. I just don't look for any kind of reassurance about my teaching from anywhere than my students, frankly, and that's a little frustrating because I really believe in our college it's the people, like, who teach really well that make our undergraduates have a good experience. And they don't care about the researchers, the students don't...So if we're being successful and more students are coming or staying, it's largely in part due to what we're doing and so it's very frustrating not to be recognized for that. But the students know who's a good teacher right, they know – they're in our offices asking us for help and not in the other offices. So there's that personal satisfaction, but in terms of professional payback for it, it's not there. And I can say right now I don't look for it but of course I do. I mean it hurts every year when merit comes around and you don't get it.

An anonymous survey entry identified anxiety as one result of the requirement to obtain external funding to validate one's research program:

Institutional pressure to secure external funding even when it is NOT necessary to do good research is a major change over my career, and a major source of anxiety (essentially making research a fundraising enterprise for the institution).

Another anonymous survey entry shares the uncertainty that resulted from changing institutional narratives to justify administrative decisions:

My department and the institution as a whole have been on a roller coaster ride. The institution is alternately flush and broke, with whiplash-like indications for the department which just merged and expanded before being threatened with dismantling or annihilation through TransformUS.

And Rafiq shares his humiliation, anger, and frustration over having his contributions as a junior faculty member not recognized.

I'm trying, I'm still trying to navigate it. I'm still trying to understand it but the feeling that sits with me right now - I have never in my career been humiliated to the level I have felt humiliation as an academic, as an assistant professor...I'm contributing and I'm devalued and I'm humiliated, humiliated – that level of humiliation then evokes this passion and this anger and this, you know, frustration because this is not my failure, this is not my failure, this is the failure of the institution to recognize and value the contributions of each and every member of the academy as individuals.

An earlier quote described the faculty as being in a state of transition where the changes are starting to become “the new normal”. Data from my survey and focus groups do show that faculty are beginning to see the increased competition, regulation, and intensification of their work as “normal”. But although it may be the new normal, it does not mean faculty enjoy it or can function well within it. Nor does it mean they can withstand a long career in the current environment. When asked by one focus group what themes I saw as emerging from the focus groups, I offered the analogy of a frog in a pot of increasingly hot water. Those present agreed it was a fair analogy, with Mark saying the following:

What I feel myself right now is at that point where I'm looking to see is it going to continue to get worse or is there a chance that it'll stop here or maybe even get better? And I'm not holding out hope for better actually. But I'm holding a hope that this is as bad as it's going to get because I can probably manage this. If things get worse, you can't keep this up for very much longer right because this sense of having hopes dashed and having, you know, the – being misunderstood and misdirected for long periods of time, that can't go on. But the – I can manage this. This temperature of water I think I can live in. So it's a really interesting position.

There was also, in many cases, a sense of irony about the academic culture becoming more like industry, particularly for those who chose an academic career over one in, say, nursing or engineering.

It's a lifestyle choice too. I mean most of us can make more money in industry. We just want to be around young people who are engaged in this exchanging crazy ideas with people. We just find it stimulating, that - the environment is stimulating for me. I know I'm making less money than I could make in industry. All of us sort of know that...So those are the kinds of reasons why we are here but that is exactly what makes it frustrating when we are told that even in academia, here is the game we want you to play. If you wanted to play that kind of game, would

you be going to the industry?...So the very thing that we've chosen not to do is coming to find us to a certain degree.

There was also a sense of irony from the participants around the dubious nature of the changes that took place through TransformUS in an effort to improve efficiency. This next quote is taken from a discussion about the creation of a pool of support staff that faculty from different departments can call on, instead of having designated support staff for each department. So although the university is behaving in many ways like corporation seeking new efficiencies, some faculty feel it is also creating some new inefficiencies, as George describes:

[S]o things have become downloaded. They've become downloaded to individual faculty members. That's about budget models, that's about financial reporting, the introduction of the Concur system means that we have to train not just on Unifi [the UNiversity Financial Information system] but also on Concur [online travel and expense system] if we're dealing with any expense claims which also takes training sessions. We're doing the work that in a business capacity in the business world administrative assistants would be doing. So the head of my department is stocking the photocopier with paper. How is that efficient? How is that "lean"? And I am spending hours trying to figure out technologies that are going to be useful once they're implemented but I still have to go through and refresh and refresh and I've got no real way – e-mail – to get any support from them because I don't, still kind of don't know who to go to.

## 7.2 Faculty Responses

Responses of study participants to the performative ethos varied widely from partial withdrawal to active resistance. Many faculty members exhibited more than one response – so for example, they might have adapted to the performative expectations, but also spoke up about their beliefs that some of the expectations are not reasonable, or appropriate. That faculty exhibit multiple responses reflects their need for different coping strategies to address different demands, and the differing extent to which they need to “take-on” or resist performative values and goals at the UofS to feel successful. Faculty whose personal and professional values are closely aligned with those of the university would likely have much less difficulty taking on performative values than those whose values are misaligned. Also, as faculty's situation changes (e.g., as they increase in rank) their coping strategies adjust to the new pressures and realities they face, as well as the fact that their values may have shifted in the interim to become more aligned with the university's values, as we saw in Chapter Five.

### 7.2.1 Withdrawal

Some participants described feelings of futility in participating in anything outside of their individual endeavors. Withdrawal from participation in institutional or collegial matters was even described by a few participants as a wholesale cultural shift by faculty in which administrative roles and activities are perceived as un-academic or even obstructive. In some cases, faculty withdrawal extended to the possibility of leaving an academic career altogether. The following is an example of withdrawal from collegial participation due to an overwhelming sense that to participate would be futile:

I have been involved in [more than one college]. Each has its own problems and neither one is getting it right. I answered "no" below [to participate in a focus group], as my years of attempts have proved futile. People hear but they do not listen. They talk and they do not speak. So, focus group discussions are [a] waste of time, source of agony. My time is better spent on my academic activities, research and teaching. (Anonymous survey entry)

The excerpt below from Michael and George's discussion, highlights the view of committee work as a rite-of-passage that faculty are compelled to do when they are a junior colleague, but that is to be avoided once tenure is achieved. We also see a judgment being made of administrative positions (e.g., Head, Chair) as "political", and unbecoming of an academic. This speaks to the divisions we saw in Chapter Five where a large proportion of faculty, while they respected their colleagues, did not feel a kinship with them.

- R1: I've served on all these committees. I don't want to do it again...
- R2: Yeah, no one likes committees, no one likes meetings, no one likes to be head, no one likes – and if you do like to be head, there's something political about you which is odd (laughter).
- R1: Yeah.
- R2: It's just – we did not get into the profession to be managers. We got into the profession to do what we wanted.

This notion of academics as independent contractors is seen again in this quote from Kamil:

And so, you know, there's a culture of irresponsibility that every, you know, among faculty that...think "It's not really my job to do this, this is all bullshit, I don't care what administrators say, I just have to do whatever [I] choose in that moment to think is [my] job". And you know it's frustrating. And administrators sometimes play games...

And in the following, Kamil goes on to describe administrative faculty and non-administrative faculty as different "types" of people, with faculty being independent contractors that eschew committee work or administrative positions – a withdrawal of sorts:

- R1: I don't know how long you've been on campus but I think the us and them tension between administration and faculty had receded and has flared up again somewhat and is maybe dying down a little bit again but, you know, a lot of good work and trying to convince people that, actually, planning is not necessarily an evil thing to have to do. But there is still an unfortunate division. You can't get – you know people won't attend a meeting.
- R2: Oh yeah.

- R1: You call a meeting and 15 people out of 300 turn up. And then, you know, I can't even do the math, but 285 will complain that they weren't consulted. You know, it's frustrating all around.
- I: And so do you think that's – is that just a function of how faculty are wired as people or do you think that that is a more recent phenomenon because of a lack of trust, you know, because of what's been going on on campus, like what are your –
- R1: I think that's how people think of it but I think it's actually being going on in academic circles since the dawn of time.
- I: Yeah, yeah.
- R: I don't know if it's exactly how they're wired but it's more a cultural piece maybe on campus. We're like independent contractors in many ways, so, no we're not used to people telling us what to do or when to turn up.
- R2: Yes, yes.
- R3: Yes.

And finally, in an extreme form of withdrawal, faculty sometimes have the option to leave academic altogether, particularly if they are from a professional colleges as the following two respondents are:

- R1: And another thing is...people have the option to leave. Right, if they get really frustrated with the institution and we see that somebody is not being valued, they just – and people are leaving right.
- R2: No, they go to corporations and they are very clear, you do this eight hours a day, you succeed, you get more money.

### 7.2.2 Compliance, Resilience, and Adaptation

Some participants responded to the performative ethos by complying, although seldom wholeheartedly. In most narratives, compliance was a contradictory process, one rife with ongoing self-negotiation around how to fulfill roles that seem to be in conflict. As an example of this process, the series of quotes below illustrates the journey that Michael undertook from a junior colleague to a tenured professor, and how he dealt with the demands placed on him at different times in his career. The first quote highlights how he felt he had no choice but to accept all committee assignments when he was untenured for fear of negatively affecting his career path.

- R1: When I arrived [at the University] I was instantly slotted into a whole host of committees and I dare not stand up to that because of course I was untenured...I did not have any choice right, I did not have any choice. Well, I suppose I did and now I understand, you know.
- R2: But you feel, you felt, so this comes back to this sense of if I don't do this, what are the implications? How's this going to play out in terms of my career path if I don't?
- R1: Yeah. And it's easy for me to say no now...because I've been there a long time...But now they're saying you know 'No you middle career people, you have



to pick up the slack so that the younger people don't have to serve on all these committees'. I say 'Well, I served on all these committees, I don't want to'.

In the next quote, the same faculty member, now a more senior faculty member, describes how, given constrained time and energy, he rationalizes spending more time and energy on research, despite his assertion that he used to define himself by his teaching. He simply can't do everything that he is expected to do well, so is "phoning it in" with his teaching now.

- R: I used to really define myself by my teaching. I'm just not as interested in the teaching as I used to be. It's just – it may be my own internal dialogue doing that to myself but I feel like I'm kind of phoning it in a little bit... I don't know, but yeah like I said my teaching was the thing that I really used to define myself by in my role. Yeah, it just kind of feels like I've – I won't say given up on that but...there's that little bit of tension where you can't do maybe everything to the level you want to do all the time. But this maybe is the season for me to focus on the research a bit more. But yeah, there is that – yeah, eventually I think it gets to you and takes it out of you a little bit.
- I: Yeah, so is demotivating an accurate word to describe the effect that [the emphasis on research has] on your work, or...?
- R: In part, yeah. Like at what point do you feel like you feel like you're just pushing on a rope and you've got to stop?"

In this third and final quote, the fact that he is "phoning it in" doesn't sit well with him. He describes here a sense of guilt and loss at not being able to put his heart into his teaching, describing how he hopes to be able to develop his teaching as he wants to, once he has tenure.

I have to say that I often feel when I'm teaching that I'm flying by the seat of my pants and that could be partially my personality. But I also feel that it's a bit because the message is clear that there's other things that you should be doing instead of teaching, and that is producing research and all these other things right. So it's like, you know, well, I'll do the teaching as well as I can and then some day when I've got tenure and I don't have to think about all these other things I'm supposed to be doing right now, then I can really develop my teaching as I want to. I don't feel good about that. Especially being in a teaching position, do you know what I mean? I would like to feel that my teaching had all of my heart in it and not just the parts I had left over after considering the research stuff and the PD stuff I'm supposed to be doing and the service...

In the case of the quotes above, compliance is very much a conscious decision, but it is accompanied by resistance, now that he has tenure. While compliance for this individual was very much a decision (however fraught), compliance can also be unconscious, as I would argue it is to some extent with all faculty. For example, if 94% agree or somewhat agree they have autonomy to choose their activities, and 91% agree or

somewhat agree they spend time on what they feel is important, even if it does not get them tenure/merit/promotion, why are over half of them feeling overwhelmed? And why do 81% feel their work has intensified? I would argue that this is governmentality at play. That is, even though faculty continue to do the work that they feel is important, in many cases this work is not all that is required of them in their role. Their overall workload is compounded by spending the time required on tasks they feel ethically obligated to undertake, even if the time spent is disproportionate to the rewards, or the duties are extraneous to the demands that their roles require (e.g., mentoring). For example, even though participating social and health science faculty would prefer to do less teaching and more research, they are still spending lots of time teaching because they feel it is important, and they somehow fit their other tasks into their schedule, leading to feeling overwhelmed. This example highlights the power and subtlety of governmentality in that individuals believe they are making choices of their own free will and the role of power is minimized and normalized.

We can see this subtlety at play in Bansel and Davies's example of how disciplinary power works through audit technologies (e.g., performance appraisal) and how they are "means of governing subjects" (p. 9). "In being taken up as one's own ambitions, the ambitions of government become a technology of the self...[They] secure their individuality and their regulation as responsibilized and accountable subjects..." (2010, p. 9). The important concept here is the process of faculty *choosing* activities or goals, and the perceived autonomy associated with that choice. Being able to choose lends faculty a sense of ease that they are, in fact, in control of their work – they have some autonomy. That the choice must take place (one cannot be everything to everyone), and that the suite of choices has firm parameters and is provided by an external source (departments, administration, funding bodies) negates to some extent their actual autonomy. As Bansel and Davies put it, "The operation of these technologies on and in the subject simultaneously secures the subject's viability and subjection" (p. 9).

While some faculty members feel they do not have much of a choice in participating in the performative ethos, others, like Rafiq below, argue that adaptation is a positive way to manage expectations around compliance:

There have been so many interesting and productive ways in which a top down designation – "you've got to be interdisciplinary, you've got to do interdisciplinary research clusters" – that's actually been a boon because I would never have thought to do that before and it's been incredibly rewarding. In terms of the models that other disciplines use, I'm now co-authoring. I've done a bunch of co-authored articles with students, with staff members... So, there are so many different ways in which something that's coming top down in a very cynical – 'We've got to do this' – they don't even know what it is – it's opened up funding opportunities that I would have never taken advantage of. I've adapted to that but it's been a good thing for me. So on the one hand you've got the, 'I wish people wouldn't tell me what I have to do'. On the other hand – well, I can make it into what I want to do.

So the performative ethos is not necessarily a barrier to being successful. Faculty are the "soft-element" that is able to adapt, to navigate differently, to dance to a different tune:

- I: And what would you say [are some of the skills that help faculty to survive]? Flexibility obviously sounds like one but –
- R: Yeah, flexibility, hard work, basically seeing where the potential is, where the reward is. Part of this reward is internal; you take satisfaction in what you are doing. Or this reward is money. So you basically do what they want to get more money.

And to be honest, you know, these faculty members are intelligent creatures, so, they find out how to flow with the stream. So the basic skills that you need to have to be a successful teacher, to be a successful researcher, those basic skills will allow you to succeed in this environment as well. The only problem is that expectations and the environment is changing because of this transition to a business model... So I would say yes, if you focus on faculty, you will survive because we'll do fine, we will dance to the tune that they are playing...

Like good corporate citizens, faculty survive and even thrive by being responsive, pragmatic, and flexible. This “flexibility” is certainly one element of the general faculty response. Another important response that faculty exhibit is resilience. They persevere despite changes and challenges, because as we saw in Chapter Five, the work that faculty do is important to them, as illustrated by Rafiq:

When you get these general models that are instituted without necessarily understanding the immediate situation or the context or the kinds of research that are going on, problems occur. There's adaptation and there's resilience... We don't get into this profession unless we're resilient and really driven and ambitious regardless of what we say because we wouldn't last very long and we wouldn't get through grad school.

### 7.2.3 Resistance

Several faculty highlighted the sense of authorship that they have over their career that, although constrained by the performative ethos, is still a driving force in what is a long career path. In a research-intensive university like the UofS, knowing that they are able to choose what is important to them gives the following faculty members a sense of freedom and motivation. Rafiq frames his resistance in terms of choice and risk. His academic journey has been one of a series of important choices, ones that are aligned with their professional and personal values, despite the potential that those choices may not lead to a secure position:

I remember...[when] the head of the department resigned his position at the university because he would not implement economic cuts. And that was his choice and I remember one of my mentors...saying it would be nice to have that leeway to be able to choose. I thought, “I'll always be able to choose”...That's what you have to have if you want to deal with this kind of landscape that I was facing, I thought... When I went [for a post-doc]...I remember thinking this is probably the last year of my career, my academic career, because there are no jobs. There are no jobs. So if this is the last year, what am I going to do? I'm going to do whatever the hell I want. I did whatever the hell I wanted and it worked out

really well so they gave me a contract position... And you go from interview to interview and then, you know, finally get here – well, it could be the last year of my profession because who knows, I don't have tenure. You live like that and you realize, you make your own way, you take the consequences for what you do...you make your own way through and that way you're never disappointed because you never looked to uppity-ups for whatever. It helps if you have a supportive department though right. If you don't have a supportive department...then you're kind of screwed on that front.

This singular focus on professional and personal values as a benchmark for choosing activities is, in my interpretation, a form of resistance. It is a form of resistance because it disregards the dominant discourse of what kinds of knowledge and forms of knowledge production are valuable. It looks inward for affirmation rather than outward to be counted. That said, this resistance is qualified rather heavily by the caveat that unless one's department is supportive of them, the resistance would be short lived. The next quote from Derek is another example of turning inwards for affirmation that an activity is valuable, despite that fact that it does not "count" in terms of promotion or merit:

I guess I would say I've seen nothing to encourage me to continue [spending time in the lab with students]...I've chosen, the last few years, I've kind of worked myself out of the lab a bit and I was finding I was, for my own personal satisfaction, I was losing touch with the students, I was losing touch with what they were doing in the lab and what they were struggling with. So this year I've kind of inserted myself back in the labs and yeah, I mean that's an extra [few] hours a week that I'm not getting research done, not attending my grad students, not – so there's zero incentive for me to be doing that other than for my own – "I need to do that".

Even if faculty are able to articulate the sources of tension in their workplace, and even if they choose a path of resistance, it is still difficult maintain an academic career without some administrative support. Administrative support, or lack thereof, colored the experiences of several participants. One study participant goes so far as to describe their unit as a top-down, non-collegial administration, a "gulag of the mind" reminiscent of a "former Soviet tractor factory". It was in this vein, one in which the university environment is perceived as an ethical battleground, that Rafiq and George (respectively, quotes below) spoke of their duty, their ethical obligation, to speak out against policies and practices that they disagree with:

...We have this duty to be able to sit and voice, to be able to come together and talk about – to learn from the past, to understand the history and how that history impacts our present, right, is what we're talking about. But to do it with the idea – so as an academic, the idea is to move it so that things can be different...And it's counterproductive when the policies or changes that come in generate fear. They want us to be afraid. That way we don't push back so we're not doing our jobs. It's when you start writing letters and when you speak out regardless of whether you're tenured or marginalized. Because when people are afraid, no learning goes on.

I had a colleague come to me and say to me, actually vocalize “Listen to you, and you don’t have tenure yet!” “Listen to you!” Because like almost immediately, and I think it’s just my age, my experience that I have that, you know, I was not sitting comfortable with what I was seeing and what I was experiencing so I spoke up...That’s my job...That’s my role, that’s my obligation, and that’s precisely what I voiced. In the whole group, this is my job as an academic.

We can see that governmentality in the form of a discourse of accountability is productive, certainly from Kamil’s perspective:

And you know, everybody complains about the number of administrators that have been hired in recent years and we have all seen the graphs and stuff, but you know, like, I don’t know anybody that doesn’t work hard, not in our College. We run a very lean operation but there are quite a few people in it. Everybody is more accountable. There’s all kinds of protocols that did not exist 20 years ago and forms that have to be filled out.

But the increased accountability has been productive at more than the administrative level. It hasn’t just produced new policies and activities. According to Rafiq, it has produced new relationships:

- R: I think the university is operating rather well right now...In terms of what it should be.
- I: And so can you articulate what that is? What should it be doing? What is its role?
- R: To paraphrase or actually to quote MacKinnon [the previous president of the UofS] – it’s about a push and pull. He identifies push and pull with collective bargaining and thus sees it as unbecoming to an institution, an academic institution. What I say is that push and pull is what an [academic] institution is all about...That’s the cornerstone of what we do, its peer review. That’s the – what we’ve been doing, we’ve been glossing each other, you’ve been pushing back and it’s great...Because that’s productive, it’s generative. It’s not about calming things down. This is what governance does right, governance is supposed to calm things down.

I would argue that this “push and pull” reflects governmentality at work. That is, the discourse of accountability feeds into new policies and activities that faculty then respond to, either internalizing the “new normal” or resisting to various degrees. This dynamic is ever-present and, depending on the policy or activity, can be the focal point of attention or simply a process going on in the background. And this push-pull dynamic or “process”, as Rafiq calls it below, operates at all levels, administrative, departmental, and even at the individual level as faculty negotiate conflicting values accruing to the different roles they occupy:

[T]he reality is there's never just – power is never one way. So there's this kickback that's actually showing what the university is about...So although we can say morale has been challenged, I see TransformUS as the most productive thing possible because we pushed back...But at the same time it suggests the flow, the process. A university is not a thing, entity, an institution. It's a process and that's what that revealed and that was the most wonderful thing.

### 7.3 Summary and Conclusion

The feelings of faculty members in response to the tensions between corporate and professional logics are not homogeneous. Perceptions and responses depend in part on the stage of their career, and, in part, on their personal and professional values. Those who had tenure could be more dismissive of the metrics being imposed on their work. Faculty who felt strongly about their ethical obligations as educators felt the tensions very keenly and were disillusioned by what they felt were unreasonable expectations and misplaced priorities. And there was a sense of irony and exasperation from some participants from the professional colleges who felt that although they had chosen academic careers, the corporate values and priorities were still present in their workplace.

Behavioural responses to the tensions also varied. Some faculty chose to withdraw from whatever service activities were optional, less a form of protest than a form of survival. Most faculty complied with the managerial demands attendant to the corporate logic, but their compliance was often accompanied by significant and ongoing negotiation of their academic identity and priorities as they sought to come to terms with balancing their personal and professional values with those of the institution. Flexibility and adaptation were essential qualities to achieving this balance. A few faculty actively resisted what they felt were un-academic activities or policies, either by maintaining important activities even if they were not being rewarded, or speaking up to voice their dissent. The choice to act in ways consistent with their personal and professional values, whatever the cost, most characterized resistance at the individual level. In the next and final chapter I discuss what behavioural choices made by faculty members might mean for the institution's ability to fulfill its mission and scholarly mandate.

## 8. The Current Face of Scholarship

*“It is not that performativity gets in the way of real academic work, it is a vehicle for changing what academic work is!” Ball, 2004, p. 152*

Revisiting my first research question, we can see the “face” of faculty work at the UofS is complex. Looking at faculty perceptions of their work and working environment, I found that the work faculty do is very important to them personally. But they exist in a challenging work environment where trust between colleagues is not a given, and with too much to do and too little time to do it well. The principle challenges they face are the intensification of their work over the last several years, time-crunch, the down-load of administrative responsibilities, and, for many, living with a chronic misalignment between personal, professional, and university values. Tensions faculty reported are largely related to navigating within a system that is informed by competing logics and value systems - academic, corporate, professional, and personal. Examples of tensions include the upholding of professional standards while satisfying the student-as-client, balancing quality and quantity of research and scholarly outputs under the current reward system, and maintaining a program of research and scholarly work in an area of personal interest whilst trying to remain relevant to university and funding agency priority areas. The vast majority of faculty say they are engaged in their work. To faculty surveyed, engagement means being passionate about their work, and being able to effectively navigate the workplace to create the conditions in which they can successfully conduct their research/scholarly work and teaching, while being able to maintain productivity.

### 8.1 Tensions, Challenges, and Faculty Responses

How does the higher education context affect how faculty members feel about their role and their work, in terms of their values, goals, and motivations? Although based on a small sample, my findings confirm what I found in my literature review – that is, faculty are by-and-large deeply principled, and largely intrinsically motivated. But the intrinsic motivation is being undermined by the current university reward structure that does not reward important activities equally (e.g., teaching and research). There is a distinct malaise within the faculty I spoke to. For some it was a sense of loss, while for others it took shape as frustration.

Not all faculty perceived challenges and tensions in the same way. Personal values and rank have a big impact on faculty perceptions and experiences. For example, congruence with university values increases with rank, limiting the conflict between those two values systems and reducing tension. For those who did identify challenges and tensions, do they “do” their work differently in response? Some do, yes. Some decide to forgo promotion to focus on activities they feel are important but not necessarily rewarded, such as teaching. Conversely, others focus on what is rewarded and spend less time on activities that are not perceived as valued. But all study participants had one thing in common. Faculty from all three Colleges want more time to do research and scholarly work, and want to do less teaching and service. Even those who spend the institutionally mandated percentage of time on research (STEM participants) wish they could do even more. It is hard to say whether the challenges and

tensions have a direct impact on faculty's relationships with one another. But my findings show that while faculty may respect one another, one in four faculty do not feel a sense of kinship or trust their colleagues. The impact this has on collegiality and collaboration within units would be an interesting study for the future.

## 8.2 A Mission Compromised

My third research question asked: What do the findings mean for the future of scholarship (given the wide-ranging debate about the faculty role in the new knowledge economy), and the ability of the University to fulfill its scholarly mandate? The reader will recall that performativity occurs at institutional and individual levels, and has different effects and responses for each. First and foremost, power as performativity is productive. As an example, TransformUS as a performative strategy engaged faculty profoundly, whether positively or negatively. It got more people talking about what the university is and should be. But despite the productive and positive impacts the performative ethos has had on the university, it also fostered potential and real crises for faculty and for the institution as a whole. Some of these crises are mission-related, and some are ethical. The 1993 UofS Mission Statement for the University of Saskatchewan states that, "As an academic community, our mission is to achieve excellence in the scholarly activities of teaching, discovering, preserving and applying knowledge". Given the findings in this study, I argue the goals of achieving excellence in teaching and discovery while maintaining high ethical standards have the potential to be compromised by the performative ethos that has developed over the last many years.

Beginning with teaching, I argue that excellence in teaching appears to be rewarded in a way that is not commensurate with its stated value to the institution, in terms of merit, promotion, and tenure. This is not to say that excellent teaching isn't valued; it's just hard to measure. The fundamental trouble is, according to Ranson, "the financier's accounts and tables cannot provide the conditions for achievement that grow out of acquiring the internal goods of reflective agency within learning communities" (2003, p. 470). And if teaching is hard to measure, it's even harder to compare and to reward fairly. That said, because it is a core activity of the institution, the university is beholden to come up with a way to do so, and the Student Evaluation of Education Quality (SEEQ) form introduced somewhat recently at the UofS is intended to meet this need, at least in part. In the meantime, the lack of appropriate rewards and acknowledgement for teaching in terms of merit, promotion, and tenure will continue to pressure faculty (especially untenured faculty) to focus their time and energy on other scholarly activities more easily measured and rewarded. This tension between a corporate and professional logic, and the primacy of research in the current value-system in place at the university, is reflected in a quote I presented earlier: "A teacher-scholar...is a tri-council funded researcher who happens to have some time for teaching". The term "scholar" is equated with holding Tri-Council funding. In this faculty member's estimation, not only is research the primary criteria used to define "quality" scholarship, but more specifically, federally-funded research is the signifier of a true scholar. Teaching is perceived as simply a duty that must be accomplished on side of one's research.



Related to excellence in discovery, I argue that the performative ethos could diminish innovation. If we revisit the findings from Chapter Five, we will recall that, of those who disagreed or somewhat disagreed that their department supported boundary pushing work, 46% were from STEM disciplines, 42% were from Social or Health Sciences, and only 12% were from the Humanities or Fine Arts. Yet Humanities and Fine Arts units (with a few exceptions) ranked poorly after the TransformUS program review, even though they are, by the account of faculty participating in this study, the ones who are more supportive of taking risks. No wonder, then, that the Humanities and Fine Arts respondents show the lowest congruence with university values in terms of feeling their discipline is valued.

Excellence in discovery could be at risk in the long-term by encouraging productivity in the short term, depending on the motivations of the faculty being hired. Based on my findings, I would argue that if an individual is motivated by external measures (money, promotion) than they are more likely to optimize their outputs to the metrics being used, and not necessarily to what is, or could be, of high impact to a discipline or of high utility to society or a particular community. As Bansel and Davies (2010, p. 17) put it, “self-reference, self-management, and self-surveillance amount to self-censorship”. This is not just an ethical dilemma (which I will discuss below), but an academic one. Innovation is one of the University’s core values and essential to achieving its mandate of excellence in discovery and application of knowledge. Bansel and Davies also briefly acknowledge this possibility: “Given the centrality of knowledge production to the academic [a] shifting perception of risk has serious implications for the generation of new and different knowledge” (p. 17).

Given the findings from this study, I beg to make the argument, albeit preliminary, that the university has structured the reward system to reward low-risk endeavors and penalize high-risk ones. Of course there are exceptions, but in terms of building a culture of innovation, I believe the University has not necessarily aligned its incentive/disincentive system to its goals. This participant’s sense is that the games at the institutional level diminish quality: “My feeling is all the things that are pushing me towards mediocrity – they’re all local”. I am not saying that innovative research is not being done, and that students aren’t experiencing excellent teaching. Rather, my survey and interview data suggest that a performative culture is becoming entrenched at the university, and that this culture can encourage behaviours that diminish excellence in teaching and discovery, while also exposing faculty to ethical dilemmas on a regular basis, and exposing the university to a crisis of mission.

### 8.3 Ethical “Slip” and Conclusion

The University’s Guidelines for Academic Conduct (1999) state that ethical behaviour “is defined by the ideals and values shared by a community”. One of the emerging challenges I focus on in this study is the misalignment between what is being valued and what is being measured and rewarded at the University. For instance, if we revisit the scoring framework for academic programs outlined in Chapter Three and juxtapose them with the values espoused in the University’s Mission Statement, there is a clear misalignment. Values of creativity, innovation, inspiration, fairness, and high academic

and ethical standards are espoused in the Mission Statement, in contrast with outcomes, impact productivity, external and internal demand, and revenue being measured by the scoring framework (see Appendix F for details). Derek describes this disconnect nicely:

But the university isn't, the university was never designed, the disciplines I think that we're in were never designed to be cost effective...in that sense. In a "this equals that" sense. This is where the Liberal Arts component of things come into focus. This is what the university, when we look historically at the university, this is what they were grounded in. This is where it all began. So we're going to abandon those principles and abandon all of that for the sake of research dollars?...[O]ur federal governments and our provincial governments are being lax in their responsibility to the education of citizens in this country, you know.

If ethical behaviour is defined and governed by shared ideals and values, and if the values at the university are, or are perceived to be, in flux (or even contradictory) as the institution evolves into a corporate-styled entity, then it can be no surprise that ethical dilemmas are emerging for individuals making their way through the University system. These dilemmas or crises are primarily centered on navigating the performative ethos at the University, which in some cases runs counter to individuals' values and priorities. Whether crises are of the acute variety (using graduate students as article-writing "slaves") or of the "slow-boil" and chronic variety (deliberately allocating less time and energy to teaching because it is not perceived as rewarded), faculty must respond by choosing between leaving the University, identifying alternative markers of success and seeking those, or complying with the performative regime and focusing their energy and time on the things being "counted". As one faculty member who was quoted earlier suggested, faculty members need to identify where the "potential" and "rewards" are, with (in his estimation) the options being a dichotomy: internal satisfaction or money. Of course, in not all cases will these be mutually exclusive, but some faculty feel that they are, particularly those who are not working in areas of priority or whose methods or areas of research do not readily extend themselves to immediate application.

I want to focus for a moment on the broader, chronic crises of individual academic identity and roles. These crises result from an accumulation of role conflict experiences over a period of many years as the academic milieu has evolved. Such a slow-boil ethical crisis would coerce a thoughtful, talented teacher-scholar to focus his or her emotional and intellectual energy almost solely on research instead of teaching because s/he knows s/he will not get tenure if s/he does otherwise. It would cause a professional to reconsider joining the academy, because for all the talk of collegiality and collaboration, the research enterprise appears to be a game to be played and a strategy to be applied, not a genuine search for the meeting of minds. Ball highlights the potential for "the demands of performativity [to] dramatically close down the possibilities for 'metaphysical discourses', for relating practice to philosophical principles like social justice and equity" (2004, p. 147). In this vein, I argue that this game-playing is unethical wherever it diminishes the quality of research, teaching, or professional practice by prioritizing expediency, efficiency or productivity over the needs of research subjects, students, or the quality of scholarship.

Just as concerning as the crises of identity and the forces that breed them is what appears to be the potentially contagious nature of the ethical “slip” that can result from these ethical crises. This slip can be seen in previous quotes about temptations to comply with performative expectations even when they clash with personal or professional values (e.g., “the dark side is luring” “it’s a slippery slope”). In the sense that Ball (2004, p. 149) draws attention to “representational and constitutional fabrications”, faculty may start out viewing activities that constitute their “performance” as representative, but as the behaviors become ingrained over time a new self is created. Instead of documenting a performance, faculty are instead remaking themselves, and a new academic culture, in the process.

#### 8.4 Conclusion

I began this study with a desire to understand how social, political, and technological developments have led to changes in higher education that have shaped the working environment for faculty, how faculty perceive and respond to this context, and what their responses mean for the mission of the university. As is typical in large bureaucratic institutions that have been around for some time, the impact of the external changes on university values and policies has bred an institution riddled with contradictory logics and expectations. The most contradictory of these logics, referring back to earlier chapters, are those of corporate efficiency and accountability versus those attendant to the academic profession and specific disciplines. These contradictions provide the stage for what Polster calls “the academic dance” (2012). This dance is one of increasing regulation and intensification of work, where faculty are pulled between their multiple accountabilities to their discipline, to their department, to students, and to their institution.

In this study, the faculty role is seen by many faculty members as a privileged position, one with ethical obligations to their discipline and to students. Narratives of engaged colleagues are often drawn in ethical dimensions – soldiering on, “good” citizens, duties and obligations, and so on. I propose here that a performative ethos has become embedded in everything from individual faculty renewal and promotion processes to institutional budget and strategic planning processes. This ethos fosters ethical dilemmas that faculty are regularly called upon to negotiate and decide upon. These crises are more or less difficult to negotiate depending on how aligned one’s professional and personal values are with the performative ethos, and where one stands in the ranking system. More critically for the university as a whole, how faculty respond to the performative ethos (withdrawing from university life, choosing research topics based on likelihood of easy publication, choosing research topics based on minimal risk so they can be productive right away) has an impact on whether or not the institution can achieve its mandate of excellence in teaching and discovery. How faculty respond will, collectively and over time, shape the culture of the university and the normative and ethical expectations for future generations of faculty members and students.

Tying my findings back to the literature covered in the earlier sections of this thesis we can see that the major shifts in higher education are having a palpable impact on the

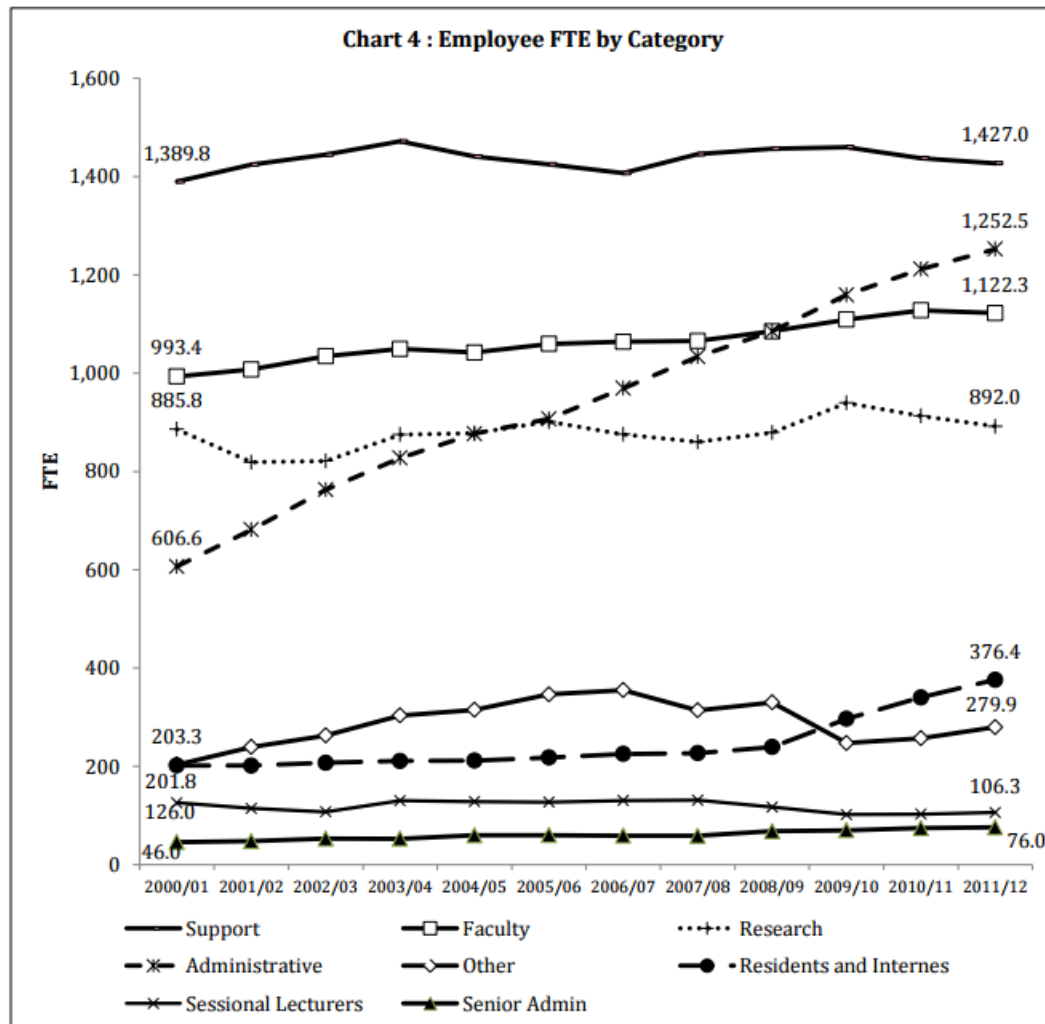
feelings and behaviours of faculty every day. Neoliberal shifts in politics and economic theory have informed the development of the corporate university, where a market-ethic pervades most aspects of knowledge “production”, one example of which is increasingly rigid intellectual property rights for research sponsors, as opposed to unrestricted sharing of knowledge. The advance of knowledge theory has led to the favoring of certain types of knowledge products that are “counted”, which in the corporate university has led to diminishing returns for teaching and mentoring activities, and scholarly pursuits that are not within the priority areas. The non-commensurate valuing of teaching, mentoring and non-priority scholarly activities puts faculty in a position to make important choices about what activities they will pursue, choices that could jeopardize the institution’s mission.

The key contribution this thesis has made to the literature is, I believe, its use of mixed methods to paint a detailed picture of how faculty are experiencing the significant changes and challenges in the academic milieu. This exploratory study goes beyond faculty’s perceptions of their work and working environment, considering their responses and what these responses could mean for the mission of the university. The use of Foucault here was an important contribution because it allows me to share how a constellation of factors made the current milieu possible, how seemingly inescapable it is, and how powerless faculty feel to change the trajectory of the current changes within the higher education sector.

I began with a quote by Polster, and I would like to end with one here. “The changes in social relations...are troubling not because they diminish professors’ entitlements, but because they undermine faculty’s ability (and arguably, also administrators’ ability) to fulfill the academic mission” (Polster, 2012, p. 119). I extend this concern here to the institution. That is, given my findings, I am concerned that the ethical crises and the environment that breeds them may lead to an institutional inability to achieve its mission – the faculty’s dilemma magnified. That said, the University of Saskatchewan is currently undergoing a revision of the 1993 Vision, Mission, and Values statement. This evolution itself is a marker of the considerable change in the external and internal environment of the UofS. Future research would do well to focus on the shift that is taking place in the university around its mission, how it is articulated, how it is achieved relative to faculty’s role.

## Appendix A – University of Saskatchewan Employee Breakdown (2000-2011)

Taken from the minutes of University Council, 2:30 p.m., Thursday, September 20, 2012. Available online <http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/agenda/2012-2013/2012%20Oct%20council%20agenda.pdf>



## Appendix B - Survey Tool With Responses

### **ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT THE UNIVERSITY. Details about your department, rank, tenure status, and time as a faculty member.**

What department are you in? For the College of Nursing, please select Nursing.

*Archaeology & Anthropology, Art & Art History, Biology, Biomedical Engineering, Chemistry, Chemical and Biological Engineering, Civil and Geological Engineering, Computer Science, Drama, Economics, Electrical and Computer Engineering, English, Environmental Engineering, Geography and Planning, Geological Sciences, History, Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies, Music, Mathematics & Statistics, Mechanical Engineering, Native Studies, Nursing, Philosophy, Religion & Culture, Physics & Engineering Physics, Political Studies, Psychology, Ron and Jane Graham School of Professional Development, Sociology*

What is your faculty title?

*Full Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Emeritus, Other*

Which of the following describes your tenure status?

*Tenured, tenure-track, not tenure track*

Do you currently have any of the following job titles?

*Dean; Director or Executive Director; Associate Dean; Assistant Dean; Chair (or Acting Chair); Associate Chair; Assistant Chair; Department Head; Central Administration (president, vice-president, provost, vice-provost, acting or associate vice-president or acting or associate provost or vice-provost)*

a) If yes, for how many years have you held this position?

*(Continuous variable, 2 digits allowed)*

In what year did you begin your first FT faculty position (at this, or any other university)?

*(Continuous variable – 4 digit number allowed)*

### **ABOUT YOUR WORK. This includes how you feel about your work, how you spend your time, and how you feel about accountability measures in your unit.**

In your current position, what are your institution's expectations around how you are to divide your time on the following activities? Place a percentage beside each activity - the column total should add up to 100%. If you aren't sure, please choose "I don't know".

*Teaching (undergraduate or graduate), Research and/or Scholarly and Artistic Work, Service (e.g., committee work), I don't know*

On the whole, how do you divide your time between the following activities? Place a percentage beside each activity - the column total should add up to 100%. If you aren't sure, please choose "I don't know".

*Teaching (undergraduate or graduate), Research and/or Scholarly and Artistic Work, Service (e.g., committee work), I don't know*

If you had your way, how would you actually spend your time? Place a percentage beside each activity - the column total should add up to 100%. If you aren't sure, please choose "I don't know".

*Teaching (undergraduate or graduate), Research and/or Scholarly and Artistic Work, Service (e.g., committee work), I don't know*

It is clear to me what is required to achieve tenure in my unit

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

The scholarly activities I feel are important "count" when it comes to tenure/promotion/merit

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

The volume of documentation required of me to demonstrate performance is reasonable

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

To what extent do you feel the discipline in which you are currently working is valued by the university?

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

The work I do is very important to me.

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I have the freedom to develop projects or undertake activities that I think are important

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I spend time on activities that are important to me, even if they won't get me promotion/tenure/merit.

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

My work has intensified over the last several years

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

(If work has intensified) How has your work intensified?

*Open-ended response*

Think about a colleague or another faculty member you know at the University who is really engaged in their work. In your opinion, what qualities do they have, and what do they do, that make them "engaged"?

*(open-ended text response – 10,000 max characters)*

I am really engaged in my work

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

**ABOUT YOUR IMMEDIATE WORK ENVIRONMENT  
(DEPARTMENT/COLLEGE/SCHOOL). This includes your views on collegiality,  
competition, work culture in your unit, and transparency.**

My colleagues and I have mutual respect for one another

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I feel a real “kinship” with my colleagues

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I trust my colleagues

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I am in competition with others in my department for scarce resources (pilot funding, research assistants, office/research/lab space)

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I feel I am a strong competitor for internal resources

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I don’t mind competition; it’s part of the job

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I am satisfied with my department’s culture around work-life balance

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I am satisfied with my compensation package as a whole (salary, benefits, etc.)

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

Resource allocation in my unit (e.g., space, funded research assistants) is transparent

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

Decisions regarding salary increases in my unit are transparent

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

In my unit the tenure and promotion process is fair

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

Colleagues doing work that might be considered atypical or “boundary-pushing” for my discipline are supported by my department

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I have a good working relationship with my department head

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*



**ABOUT YOUR ACCESS TO RESOURCES. Includes personal and work-related resources.**

I have the work-related resources I need (e.g., space, personnel, funding) to do my job well

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I have access to professional development resources e.g., (travel funding, assistance to improve teaching)

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I have sufficient time to focus on the aspects of my job that I love

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

There isn't enough time to do everything that is expected of me at work, and to do it well.

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I feel overwhelmed by the things going on at work

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

Most days, I have enough energy to do my job well

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

My responsibilities outside of the workplace are distracting for me while I'm at work

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

I have resources (people, networks) outside of the workplace that I can draw on to help me through challenging situations and times at work

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

There are role models in my unit of how to create a satisfying work-life balance

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

Collaboration is essential to my success as an academic

*Agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree*

**ABOUT YOU. Includes age, year of birth, minority status, and your education.**

Sex

*Male, Female*

Year of birth

*(continuous variable, 4 digits)*

Highest degree

*Doctoral degree (PhD., Ed.D., PEng., etc.); Master's degree (MA, MSc, MN, MEng, MBA, MEd, MFA, MSW); etc.); Bachelor's degree (BSN., BA, BSc, etc.); Other*

Year you were granted your highest degree

*(Continuous variable, 4 digits)*

Select all that apply. Leave this question blank if it does not apply.

*I am Aboriginal; I have a disability; I am a visible minority; English is my second language;*

**Are you willing to be contacted to participate in a follow-up focus group? If so, please enter your preferred contact details below, including your name.**

**Would you like to see a copy of the report from this study?**

**Comments?**

**Thank you for your time.**

## Appendix C – Focus Group Guide

### ❖ Go-round introductions

#### ❖ About myself:

- I am a farm girl from Elbow, Saskatchewan. I am married with one child, and a second on the way.
- My undergrad, MA, and PhD are all from the UofS. Although I started my PhD at the University of Alberta.
- I was funded by SSHRC for my MA and my PhD (under a different last name). I declined the PhD award to work full-time, but picked up my studies after about 6 months, because I felt it was important work and, I missed the intellectual stimulation.
- I have worked in College of Nursing and for SHRF. So I have experience with both sides of the research process.

#### ❖ Describe the larger study and the purpose of the FG:

- I want to take a few minutes to tell you about my study. I think the better you understand why you are here, the better our conversation will be. And then we can both leave feeling like we've accomplished something.
- My study focuses on broad changes in higher education sector over the last few decades, how they take shape in institutional policies, and how they are experienced by faculty at the institutional level. So I am looking at things from three levels: at the highest is global changes in politics, education, and technology; at the middle level is the institutions that have to interpret and adapt to these changes, and; at the most immediate level is individual faculty and how they experience working in their current working environment.
- Just a few examples of these broad changes are:
  - 1) increase in global competition (for faculty, students, between institutions)
  - 2) the increasing emphasis of international rankings
  - 3) declining government support (relative to inflation) and increased reliance on private sector funders/partners
  - 4) increased emphasis on applied research and innovation, particularly STEM disciplines
  - 5) increasing reporting requirements for institutions (this trickles down to College/departments/faculty as well)
- These high-level changes lead to changes at most research intensive universities to adapt to the new political, economic, and social “requirements” of the institution. For example:
  - 1) increase their auditing and financial reporting capabilities and requirements (more ppl in ResServ, FinServ)
  - 2) implement more rigorous review processes (ethics, grant submission, etc.)
  - 3) emphasize on research funding from certain sources (tri-council, b/c of prestige, but also indirect costs)
  - 4) undertake program review (e.g., TransformUS)
  - 5) implement new budget models (e.g., TABBS, activity-based budgeting)
- I want to know how these changes at the global and institutional levels have impacted faculty. Just to be clear, my goal is not to prove some sort of cause-

and-effect. My goal is to take-stock of how faculty are feeling and thinking about their work and working environment given the current context.

- So today, I will be asking you about what you think are some of the biggest changes in higher education, how these impact your work at the university, and how you feel about the changes/your role/your working environment. I will also be sharing some of early survey results with you to shape our discussion.
- One caveat here: This study is not focused on the **process** of TransformUS. For the purposes of my study, TransformUS was just one example of many things the UofS and other institutions are doing in reaction to the new higher education environment. I'm certainly interested in discussing it, but only to the extent that it impacts how you feel about your work and your role at the university, and whether living through the experience changed anything for you.
- Components of the study: You all completed a survey, so you know about the survey portion of the study. The intent of the survey was to collect mostly descriptive data on how faculty feel about their work and their working environment. It's hard in a survey format to explore anything in depth, so I'm hoping we can do that today.

❖ **Consent (review form, sign, collect) – highlight their roles in preserving confidentiality**

- 1) To begin, I'd like to take a few minutes to discuss what you think are some of the most important changes in higher education in the last decade or two. I listed some earlier, like an increasing focus on STEM disciplines, or the development and popularity of international rankings which leads to more competition between institutions. **What would you say are some of the most significant changes that you've seen in higher education, specifically related to research intensive institutions like the UofS?**
- 2) a) I'm going to circulate a list of some changes at the institutional and individual level that can be a source of tension in academic work. (*circulate list for participants*) Please take a few minutes to review the list. **Do the items on this list resonate with you as potential sources of tension for faculty? In what ways? How not...? Have I missed anything important?**  
  
b) *I want to share something with you from the survey. 80% of respondents "agreed" that their work has intensified over the last several years. In what ways has work become more intense? How do you think work intensification relates to the changes we just discussed, if at all?*
- 3) I have a few follow-up questions to the survey about your working environment. I don't want to dwell on these... We've discussed how changes in higher education have led, in part, to the increasing intensification (do more in less time, sense of urgency) and regulation (accountability) of work. I want to ask **how (if at all) these changes have affected your work environment, specifically in terms of:**
  - a) **Collegiality. Have your relationships with your colleagues changed at all (trust, respect, feeling of being a "family" with common interests)? If so,**

**why? 1 in 4 (25%) of respondents said they did not feel a sense of “kinship” with their colleagues.**

- b) **Competition** – 80% of respondents said competition was just part of the job. **In what ways do you have to be competitive as an academic (research funding, what else...?). Have the changes increased competition between departments or Colleges (e.g., b/c of program review), or even within departments (b/c of dwindling resources for research/teaching support), etc.**
  - c) **Have these changes impacted collaboration within your department, or even with people outside your department? (Do you collaborate more or less, and with whom?) Have you experienced any disincentives to collaborate round teaching/research because of uncertainty about where the seed money will come from, or where the research dollars will go?**
  - d) **Transparency** – *Around 50% felt resource allocation in unit was transparent. Only ~20% felt resource allocation at the university was transparent. Has this always been the case, or is this a more recent phenomenon?*
  - e) **Supervisor Relations** – There is speculation in the literature that processes like program review can be extremely stressful for administrative faculty as they feel stuck between their dept faculty and the demands of administration and they are called on to make difficult decisions. **Have the changes we are talking about impacted relationships between faculty members and department heads (for better or worse)?**
  - f) **Work/life balance** – *30% of respondents are dissatisfied with dept culture of work/life balance, almost 40% do not have a role model in their department of a good work/life balance. Has balancing work and a personal life always been difficult, or is this something that has changed in the last several years?*
- 4) **Has your work itself changed as a result of any of these changes, in terms of...**
- a) **Types of activities or tasks** that you focus on, or don't focus on... (teaching, research, service, committees, involvement in policy planning, community service, mentoring or being mentored) *Actual: Teach 40%, Research 32%, Service 26%. Preferred: Teach 36%, Research 48%, Service 16%. Faculty are spending less time on things that they want to be spending time on. Has this always been the case, or this is more recent change?*
  - b) **The Essential skills to be successful** - **What are the essential skills to be a successful academic? Are they the same as when you started your academic journey? If not, in what ways have they changed?**
  - c) **How else** has what you do in your role changed?
- 5) **I want to ask you how you feel about your role and your work, in terms of...**
- a) **Values and goals** as a faculty member. **(Do you feel like your values and goals as a faculty member are aligned with those of the university?)** *30% of respondents said they did not feel their discipline was valued by the university. Thoughts on this?*
  - b) *Actual: Teach 40%, Research 32%, Service 26%. Preferred: Teach 36%, Research 48%, Service 16%. Faculty are spending less time on things that they*

*want to be spending time on. Does this resonate with you, and does it affect how you feel about your work?*

- c) Your motivations. What motivates you to do your job well? Has it changed at all relative to when you started out in academics?
  - d) How else have these changes affected how you feel about being a faculty members?
- 6) Is there something we haven't talked about that you think is important to discuss? What am I missing?
- 7)
- 8) If there is time...On the whole, would you say there is a difference between faculty who have been around for a long time, and faculty who are just coming in, or have been around a short while (views of the job, different expectations, attitude)?

*Any final comments before we wrap things up?*

*If you want to see the final results of this study, please just let me know on your way out, and I will make sure I send you a copy of the final report. Thank you again for your time.*

## Appendix D – List of Challenges and Tensions

Discussed during focus groups:

### **Examples of changes in higher education that may be sources of tension and intensification for faculty**

#### **Institutional changes:**

- 1) increase in auditing and financial reporting capabilities
- 2) implementation of more rigorous ethics review processes
- 3) emphasis on research funding from certain sources (tri-council, b/c of prestige, but also indirect costs)
- 4) undertaking program review (e.g., TransformUS)
- 5) implementing new budget models (e.g., TABBS, activity-based budgeting)

#### **Changes for individual faculty:**

- 1) Increased reporting requirements/accountability (e.g., annual and financial reports to funders, ethics updates, annual review);
- 2) Some activities feel more valued than others (e.g., research vs. service)
- 3) Work intensification requires difficult choices about how to spend one's limited time
- 4) Emphasis on increasing teaching quality AND bringing in more research dollars (teacher/scholar model);
- 5) Emphasis on acquiring research funding from preferred sources (e.g., NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR, CFI)
- 6) Research knowledge must be "useful" in very applied terms, leading to an emphasis on applied disciplines (STEM);
- 7) Calls to be increasingly flexible (when and where work is done, use of technology to teach and report, even flexibility in framing a research topic to align with funding agency mandate);
- 8) Language in policy documents positions the university as a community or family, but program review can leave units feeling otherwise;

## Appendix E – List of Codes/Nodes

### Administration

- Administration bloat at institution
- Administrative burden
- Lack of front line support

### Preferred activity

### Institutional goals and values

### Feelings and reactions to tensions

### Contradictions

### Imagery and Analogies

### Emphasis on external funding

### Leadership

### Transparency

### Ethics

### Work-Life balance

### Intensification

- Administrative work
- Class size and teaching
- General
- Not really more intense
- Research and research funding
- Service

### Engagement definition

- Student and/or learning focused
- Energy, enthusiasm, optimism
- Ability to prioritize, focus, manage time, disciplined
- Ability to avoid admin work and/or teaching
- Productive, especially at research
- Intellectual curiosity and vision
- Have time
- Play the game
- Service or efforts to make a difference
- Spend personal time
- Don't let admin deter them
- Collegial

### Emotional resilience and outside support

### Risk

### Tensions and challenges

- Student as client
- Impact of technology
- Expectations vs support
- Quality
- Ethical degradation



- Metrics
- Big picture and long-term thinking
- Teaching vs research
- Experienced differently for different groups
- Playing the game
- International vs local
- Business model being imposed on academic
- Work vs personal life
- Change
- Power

Transparency

Unanticipated consequences

Work-life Balance

## Appendix F – Comparison of University Values with Academic Programs Scoring Framework

University Values	Academic Programs Scoring Framework (from highest scoring to least)
We value creativity, intellectual curiosity, innovation, critical thinking, and knowledge.	Quality of outcomes (18%)
We value the pursuit of high academic and ethical standards.	Impact, justification, and overall essentiality (14%)
We value the diversity of our University community; the people, their points of view, and the contributions they make to the realization of our mission.	Size, scope, and productivity (12%)
We value the ideas, continuing interest, and support of the people of Saskatchewan and Canada.	External demand (11%)
We value the University as a place of human dignity and fairness.	Revenue and resources (10%)
We value the freedom and independence to engage in the open pursuit of knowledge.	Internal demand (10%)
We value our campus as a place of inspiration and beauty.	Costs and expenses (8%)
	Quality of inputs (6%)
	Opportunity analysis (6%)
	History, Development, and Expectations (5%)

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